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The Ambivalent Discourse of the Female Travel Writer in Freya Stark's *Baghdad Sketches* and *The Valleys of the Assassins*

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Resumo

Freya Stark (1893–1993) é uma viajante britânica que cresceu no norte da Itália, e uma escritora que escreveu cerca de trinta livros, bem como cartas, autobiografias e ensaios sobre as suas viagens, principalmente no Oriente Médio. Stark não conseguiu obter educação formal devido à situação financeira de sua família, mas ela foi para Londres para estudar história na Escola de Estudos Orientais e Africanos (SOAS), o qual foi interrompido devido à Primeira Guerra Mundial. Depois de passar sua juventude trabalhando no norte da Itália e não poder encontrar tempo e recursos suficiente para poder escrever, Stark escolheu uma carreira Orientalista no Oriente Médio, que lhe trouxe um tremendo sucesso literário ao se tornar uma das primeiras mulheres a ser reconhecida e atribuída com a "Back Grant" da Royal Geographical Society devido a sua contribuição científica e talento literário.

Embora pareça um percurso fácil a partir desta breve descrição, Stark lutou imensamente ao longo do caminho para ser reconhecida pela sociedade britânica, e demonstrou essas lutas nos seus textos. Sendo uma mulher solteira sem apoio financeiro e com um sotaque estrangeiro, Stark tornou-se uma preocupação para a comunidade britânica no Iraque, sendo continuamente marginalizada e limitada por eles. Ser britânico nas colônias não eliminou a desigualdade de gênero e classe da sociedade britânica de orientação masculina, já que se esperava que as mulheres continuassem seguindo as regras ocidentais de feminilidade no Oriente. No entanto, as escritoras de viagem, ao contrário das esposas dos oficiais coloniais, por estarem fora da esfera doméstica e serem escritoras a produzirem textos e conhecimento, participando de atividades colonialistas, pareciam minar a oposição binária dos papéis do masculino e do feminino. Portanto, as escritoras de viagens femininas eram perpetuamente rotuladas como excêntricas e, se fossem solteiras, também eram solteironas aos olhos dos ingleses.

O início do expansionismo europeu e da exploração econômica trouxe a relação entre a escrita de viagens e o imperialismo. A obra influente de Edward Said, *Orientalism*, realmente despertou o interesse acadêmico no gênero. Ao chamar a atenção para a função dos textos literários na construção da imagem do Oriente como inferior ao Ocidente para estabelecer autoridade, Said demonstra a importância da representação e produção de conhecimento dentro do imperialismo aplicando noções foucaultianas de poder, *power-knowledge* e discurso; a construção do sujeito oriental inferior, preguiçoso, incivilizado e feminizado permitiu aos ingleses estabelecer a imagem do Ocidente como superior, inteligente e civilizada. Usando uma análise foucaultiana, Said apontou como o imperialismo europeu foi estabelecido através da

academia, arte e literatura, além de autoridades políticas e militares. No entanto, o Orientalismo de Said tem sido altamente criticado por ser monolítico e homogeneizador, embora a fundamentalidade e a importância do trabalho também sejam reconhecidas. Além de ser um instrumento de disseminação da mentalidade colonial e construção das oposições binárias entre o Eu e o Outro através da repetição de estereótipos, como diz Said, a escrita de viagens também é uma plataforma para descobrir a instabilidade dessa divisão. O encontro com o sujeito e a cultura desconhecidos permite o estabelecimento de formas híbridas de identidade, resultando na heterogeneidade do discurso colonial. Em outras palavras, o Orientalismo de Said negligencia a transculturalidade da zona de contato onde o Eu e o Outro interagem, e onde a diferença e a semelhança são negociadas. É inegável que o discurso colonial, através dos mesmos textos literários, tenta repetidamente construir a identidade fixa do Eu e do Outro; contudo, como Homi Bhabha explica, esta tentativa é simultaneamente interrompida pela natureza da zona de contato, revelando a natureza ambivalente do discurso colonial e construindo identidades híbridas. Por outro lado, a maioria das definições e estudos sobre escrita de viagens, incluindo Bhabha e Said, abordam a tradição masculina da escrita de viagens e do discurso colonial, deixando o imenso corpo de literatura de viagem feminina intocado, e as questões de se a mulher é *Othered* pelo discurso patriarcal e como a mulher viajante pode ser parte do processo de *Othering* e do discurso colonial, permanece sem resposta.

Semelhante a essa análise pós-colonial, Judith Butler também enfoca a construção do sujeito discursivo de acordo com as relações de poder (Gender Trouble, 1990, Undoing Gender, 2004). Como observa Bhabha, ao desconstruir as divisões binárias do Eu e do Outro, o masculino e o feminino (o Oriente e o Ocidente no discurso pós-colonial), Butler afirma que o gênero é uma repetição das ações performativas; aprende-se a executar seu gênero através dessas normas reiteradas, em vez de instintivamente ser uma mulher ou um homem (Gender Trouble 43-44). A performatividade do gênero, diferentemente da performance, não é um ato voluntário, e o eu pré-discursivo não existe. Assim, as escritoras de viagens femininas, assumindo o papel masculino, não se afastam simplesmente de sua feminilidade. A sua própria performatividade ambivalente de gênero ao mesmo tempo perturba seu senso de identidade unificada, seu status dentro da sociedade e sua reconhecibilidade. A vergonha, como parte importante na construção da identidade, como explicado anteriormente, é um indicador do fato de que nem a construção da identidade nem o desempenho de gênero é um ato individual.

A intersecção de raça, gênero e classe tem sido significativa tanto para estudos pós-coloniais como de gênero. Embora muitas obras pós-coloniais tenham sido criticadas por excluir as variáveis gênero e classe, muitos críticos feministas foram criticados por não levar

em conta fatores raciais e de classe. Consequentemente, a escrita de viagens femininas foi negligenciada por proeminentes críticos pós-coloniais, como Edward Said e Homi Bhabha, porque seu discurso ambivalente não se encaixava em suas teorias com foco na tradição masculina do discurso colonial, como sugere Sara Mills. Focando-nos no interesse mútuo dos estudos pós-coloniais e de gênero através da análise do discurso de Foucault, a análise revela os aspectos negligenciados da escrita de viagens femininas e nos permite ter uma melhor compreensão desses textos. Além disso, ir além da esfera doméstica permite que essas escritoras de viagens ultrapassem e atuem fora das normas de gênero de sua cultura até certo ponto. Semelhante ao conceito de ambivalência do discurso colonial de Bhabha, o conceito de gênero de Judith Butler como um ato performativo indica a natureza ambivalente das identidades ambivalentes das escritoras de viagens femininas. Sendo solteira, italiana-britânica e não tendo uma segurança financeira constante, os textos de Freya Stark são muito úteis para examinar a interseção entre raça, gênero e classe, bem como o discurso ambivalente e a identidade do viajante feminino devido às restrições discursivas.

Os primeiros escritos de Freya Stark são um exemplo perfeito para examinar as restrições discursivas na produção e recepção dos textos e, portanto, a construção da identidade do viajante. Sua identidade nacional, antecedentes de classe e gênero demonstram como esses fatores se cruzam no discurso colonial e como cada um é crítico para a leitura dos textos. Assim, as teorias de Said e Bhabha, devido à sua cegueira de gênero, não fornecem ferramentas adequadas para examinar a escrita feminina. Os primeiros exemplos de teóricos de gênero e de leituras proto-feministas dessas obras desconsideram sua imensa cumplicidade e contribuição ao orientalismo, que Spivak chama de "feminismo do primeiro mundo". Embora Spivak não fale sobre as escritoras de viagem em particular e se concentre nas comunidades colonizadas e dupla marginalização da mulher colonizada, sua ênfase na intersecção de classe, gênero e raça permite considerar o discurso e a identidade da escritora de viagens feminina em relação a esses conceitos. Nesta dissertação, examinarei como a intersecção de gênero, raça e classe cria formas híbridas de identidade e discursos ambivalentes por causa da obrigação das restrições discursivas da sociedade.

Palavras-chave

Pós-colonialismo, Género, Literatura de viagens, Freya Stark, Médio Oriente

Abstract

The intersection of race, gender and class has been significant for both post-colonial and gender studies. While many post-colonialist works were criticized for excluding the variable of gender and class, many feminist critics were criticized for not taking race and class factors into account. Accordingly, female travel writing was neglected by prominent post-colonial critics such as Edward Said and Homi Bhabha because their ambivalent discourse did not fit their theories focusing on the masculine tradition of the colonial discourse, as Sara Mills suggests. Focusing on the mutual interest of post-colonial and gender studies through Foucauldian discourse analysis reveals the neglected aspects of female travel writing and allows us to have a better understanding of these texts. Furthermore, going outside of the domestic sphere allows these female travel writers to trespass and perform outside the gender norms of their culture to some extent. Similar to Bhabha's concept of ambivalence of colonial discourse, Judith Butler's concept of gender as a performative act points out the ambivalent nature of the ambivalent identities of the female travel writers. Being single, Italian-British and not having a constant financial security, Freya Stark's text are very helpful to examine the intersection of race, gender and class as well as the ambivalent discourse and identity of the female traveler due to the discursive constraints.

Keywords

Post-colonialism, Gender, Travel Writing, Freya Stark, Middle East

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1. Introduction

Freya Stark (1893–1993) is a British traveller who grew up in northern Italy, and a writer who authored approximately thirty books as well as letters, autobiographies and essays on her travels mostly in the Middle East. Stark could not obtain formal schooling due to the financial status of her family, but she went to London to study history at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), which was interrupted due to the First World War. After spending her youth working in northern Italy and not being able to find enough time and resources to be able to write, Stark chose an Orientalist career in the Middle East, which brought her tremendous literary success as she became one of the first women to be recognized and awarded by the Royal Geographical Society's "Back Grant" due to both her scientific contribution and literary talent.

Although it sounds like a rather smooth journey from this short description, Stark struggled immensely along the way to be recognized by the British society, and demonstrated these struggles in her texts. Being a single woman with no financial support and with a foreign accent, Stark became a concern for the British community in Iraq, being continuously marginalized and restricted by them. Being British in the colonies did not eliminate the gender and class inequality of the male-oriented British society, as women were expected to continue to abide by the Western rules of femininity in the East. However, female travel writers, unlike the wives of the colonial officers, by being outside of the domestic sphere and writers producing texts and knowledge, participating in colonialist activities, seemed to undermine the binary opposition of the roles of the masculine and feminine. Therefore, the female travel writers were perpetually labelled as eccentrics, and if they were single they were also spinsters in the eyes of the British. Reina Lewis points out the significance of shaming in the identity construction of the subject by quoting Silvan Tomkins: "[shame] is a bad feeling attached to what one is: one therefore is something in experiencing shame … the effect of shame is not only prompted by shame at one's own behaviour but may also be activated by witnessing the shaming of another" (qtd. in Lewis 164). Hence, the shaming and marginalizing female travellers experienced inevitably shaped their identity and gender performance, leading most of them to confirm the rules of imperialism and patriarchy. Nevertheless, as Sara Mills states:

> Because of the way that discourses of femininity circulated within the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, women travel writers were unable to adopt the imperialist voice with the ease with which male writers did. The

> writing they produced tended to be more tentative than male writing. (*Discourses of Difference* 3)

Their marginalization and Othering prevented them from adopting the colonial discourse[1] entirely. Consequently, this heterogeneity and ambivalence of their discourse resulted in the neglect of female travel writing in earlier travel writing and post-colonial studies, as Mills demonstrates (Ibid. 46).

Defining travel writing has always been quite controversial; some critics prefer broader terms including all travel-related materials from maps to fictional texts such as novels and poetry, while others define it as non-fictional literary texts (Thompson 22–23). The struggle to define travel writing originates from its old tradition. Examples of travel writing in the Western cannon of literature can be found starting from the Ancient Greek era. Hence, due to the changes within the society and literary conventions, people travelled for different purposes and narrated their stories in different ways in accordance with the necessities and constraints of their publics. Nevertheless, despite the changes, the masculine tradition of travel writing prevailed. In the Western literature, as Roland Barthes notes, "[h]istorically, the discourse of absence is carried on by the Woman: Woman is sedentary, Man hunts, journeys; Woman is faithful (she waits), man is fickle (he sails away, he cruises)" (13–14). Despite this division of spheres, women always travelled and narrated their accounts; even the first written travel account was written by a female Egyptian priest, around 1130 BCE (Thompson 2). Yet, most of the available discourses and narrative strategies in travel writing centre on the male traveller, such as the warrior, the explorer, the adventure-hero, the scientist, and the monarch-of-all-I-survey. Most importantly, it was the colonialist male subject who was gathering most of the narratives together.

Particularly, the beginning of European expansionism and economic exploitation brought about the relation between travel writing and imperialism. Dennis Porter emphasizes the complexity of travel writing: "At best … travel writing has been an effort to overcome cultural distance through a protracted act of understanding. At worst it has been the vehicle for the expression of Eurocentric conceit or racist intolerance" (*Haunted Journeys* 3). This duality of travel writing, as well as its multidisciplinary nature encompassing archaeology to geography and history to literature, brought about scholarly interest in it. However, it was Edward Said's influential work *Orientalism* that truly sparked academic interest in the genre. Through drawing

[1] Within the entry "colonial discourse," Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin write: "Discourse, as Foucault theorizes it, is a system of statements within which the world can be known. It is the system by which dominant groups in society constitute the field of truth by imposing specific knowledges, disciplines and values upon dominated groups" (*Post-colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* 37).

attention to the literary texts' roles in constructing the image of the Orient as inferior to the West to establish authority, Said demonstrates the significance of the representation and production of knowledge within imperialism by applying Foucauldian notions of power, power-knowledge and discourse; the construction of the inferior, lazy, uncivilized and feminized Oriental subject enabled the British to establish the image of the West as superior, intelligent and civilized. Using a Foucauldian analysis, Said pointed out how the European imperialism was established through academia, art, and literature besides political and military authorities. Following Said's work, many scholars from different disciplines, from art historians to post-colonialists such as Ali Behdad (*Belated Travellers*, 1994), Homi Bhabha (*The Location of Culture*, 1994), Sara Mills (*Discourses of Difference*, 1991), Reina Lewis (*Rethinking Orientalism*, 2004) and Dennis Porter ("Orientalism and its Problems," 1983), were influenced to analyse these texts in relation to European imperialism. Specifically, travel writing's obsessiveness on the eye-witness status and factuality are brought into question.

Said's *Orientalism* has been highly criticized for being monolithic and homogenizing, although the fundamentality and importance of the work are also acknowledged. Apart from being an instrument of dissemination of the colonial mindset and construction of the binary oppositions between the Self and the Other through the repetition of stereotypes, as Said states, travel writing is also a platform for uncovering the instability of this division. The encounter with the unfamiliar subject and culture enables the establishment of hybrid forms of identity resulting in the heterogeneity of the colonial discourse. In other words, Said's *Orientalism* neglects the transculturality of the contact zone where the Self and Other interact, and where difference and similarity are negotiated. It is undeniable that the colonial discourse, through the same literary texts, repetitiously attempts to construct the fixed identity of the Self and the Other; yet, as Homi Bhabha explains, this attempt is simultaneously disrupted by the nature of the contact zone, revealing the ambivalent nature of the colonial discourse and constructing hybrid identities. On the other hand, most of the definitions of and studies on travel writing, including Bhabha and Said, address the masculine tradition of the travel writing and colonial discourse, leaving the immense body of female travel writing untouched, and the questions of whether the female is Othered by the patriarchal discourse and how the female traveller can be part of the process of Othering and colonial discourse remain unanswered.

The issue of female authorship in general, not only in travel writing, had been quite problematic. Women were always discouraged from producing knowledge and texts, and when they wrote, "women travellers tend to come in the form of coffee table books with lavish illustrations of these eccentric creatures" (*Discourses of Difference* 4). The reception of their

texts had been different from those written by male authors, leading to the restriction of their productions, as Mills points out. Accordingly, in previous works on female travel writing (e.g. *The Virago Book of Women Travellers* by Mary Morris, 1993, and *Wayward Women* by Jane Robinson, 1990), there was a general tendency to consider their works as anti-imperialist and proto-feminist due to this discrimination. The different characteristics of female authorship are celebrated, highlighted, and analysed. As a result, just as the male critics offered a negative reception of female texts, these feminist critics constructed the binary opposition between female and male writing. Their sympathetic voice towards the Other, their interest in the domestic issues, and their accessibility to the forbidden harems and lives of the Oriental women were examined. Their racist statements and Orientalist voices are disregarded, or the writers who were officially engaged with imperialism were not considered. However, female travel writing had a more heterogenous narrative than was considered: "a strange mixture of the stereotypically colonial content, style and trope, presenting the colonized country as naturally a part of the British Empire, whilst at the same time being unable to adopt a straightforwardly colonial voice" (Ibid. 4). Moreover, female's lack of education[2] and access to the production of knowledge within the patriarchal British society also created problems with the truth assertions, which are an essential part of both travel writing and colonial discourse. The lack of enough scientific background on the topic did not allow the female travellers to produce Orientalist knowledge, and their texts were often judged as being exaggerated when they did not follow the rules of the so-called feminine discourse. Therefore, the alternative for the neglect of female travel writing should not be solely the celebration of the anti-imperialist and proto-feminist qualities of female travel writing causing the essentialist division between male and female writing. According to Mills, the extra-textual variables and discursive constraints on production and reception, leading female travel writers' negotiations with imperialism and patriarchy to become intelligible, should be examined (Ibid. 5).

Negotiating the discourses of patriarchy and imperialism simultaneously brought about the ambivalent discourse of the female travel writers. Their discourse was not solely a conscious negotiation with the power-relations; their identity was also hybridized and constructed due to the negotiation with the constraints and transculturality of the contact zone, as Bhabha asserts (*Location of Culture,* 1994). On the other hand, in the case of female travellers the hybridization takes place not only in relation to their national identity. As Dúnlaith Bird notes concerning the construction of gender in the vagabondage travelogue, "restricted forms of textual agency are

[2] In "A Room of One's Own" (1929), Virginia Woolf criticizes women's lack of access to education and how it prevents them from producing texts.

used to produce hybrid forms of identity" (19). The contact zone, for the female traveller, becomes a stage where they can perform outside of their gender norms established by the British patriarchal society and when the feminine Other encounters the Oriental Other. For example, through cross-dressing, their choice of accommodation, the way they present themselves in their narratives, or taking over the masculine colonizer role and contributing Orientalist knowledge, they disrupt the identity of the male colonizer and British national identity, and challenge the notion of femininity.

Similar to this post-colonial analysis, Judith Butler also focuses on the discursive subject construction in accordance with the power-relations (*Gender Trouble* 1990, *Undoing Gender* 2004). As Bhabha notes, by deconstructing the binary divisions of the Self and the Other, the masculine and the feminine (the East and the West in post-colonial discourse), Butler claims that gender is a repetition of the performative actions; one learns how to perform their gender through those reiterated norms rather than by instinctively being a woman or a man (*Gender Trouble* 43–44). The performativity of gender, unlike performance, is not a voluntary act, and the pre-discursive self does not exist. Accordingly, female travel writers, by taking over the masculine role, do not simply break away from their femininity. Their own ambivalent gender performance at the same time disturbs their sense of unified identity, their status within the society, and their recognizability. Shame, as an important part in the identity construction as previously explained, is an indicator of the fact that neither the identity construction nor the gender performance is an individual act.

Freya Stark's early writings are a perfect example for examining the discursive constraints on the production and reception of the texts, and therefore the construction of the identity of the traveller. Her national identity, class background and gender demonstrate how these factors intersect within colonial discourse and how each one is critical for the reading of the texts. Thus, Said's and Bhabha's theories, due to their gender-blindness, do not provide suitable tools for examining female writing. The early examples of gender theorists and the proto-feminist reading of these works disregard their immense complicity and contribution to Orientalism, which Spivak terms "first world feminism." Although Spivak does not talk about female travel writers in particular and focuses on the colonized and double marginalization of the female colonized, her emphasis on the intersection of class, gender and race allows us to consider the discourse and identity of the female travel writer in relation to these concepts. In this dissertation, I will examine how the intersection of gender, race, and class creates hybrid forms of identity and ambivalent discourses because of the obligation of the discursive constraints of the society. In the first chapter, I will examine the narrative characteristics and

changing conventions of travel writing to point out the instability of the genre and the usefulness of travel writing for post-colonial studies. In the following chapter, the mutual concerns and parallelism between post-colonial and gender studies will be drawn upon for a comprehensive understanding of female travel writing. Lastly, Freya Stark's first two published texts, *Baghdad Sketches* and *The Valleys of the Assassins*, will be analysed in the light of the conceptions examined in the preceding chapters.

2. Travel Writing and its Relation to Post-colonialism

Despite travel writing's current popularity and the huge scholarly interest in it, the genre had been considered a middle-brow form by most literary critics and academia during the twentieth century (Thompson 2). Even today, travel writing is considered as inferior compared to the novel, for instance. Nevertheless, the reception of the genre was not always the same; during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, "voyages and travels" were regarded as "desirable and respectable" (Ibid. 33). As Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan state, travel writing's reception in academia has always been mixed, but "the genre has proven remarkably immune to even the harshest criticism, becoming one of the most popular and widely read forms of literature today" (vii). One of the reasons for the revival—or survival—of the genre is Edward Said's seminal book *Orientalism* (1978), which is considered as the foundation of post-colonial studies. In this chapter, through the examination of travel writing, I will explore the relationship between post-colonialism and travel writing.

The most essential aspect of travelling—either setting off for a distant land or just going on a journey in one's own region—is the confrontation with difference. Defining travelling has always been highly controversial; yet, regardless of being a tourist, traveller, journalist, pilgrim or soldier, and regardless of divergent attitudes towards travelling, "all travel requires us to negotiate a complex and sometimes unsettling interplay between alterity *and* identity, difference *and* similarity" (Ibid. 9). Considering the long tradition of travel writing, it can be said that travelling and writing are inseparable. Since travel writing is not only reporting on unknown lands and peoples but also disclosing the self and one's own cultural background, it concerns many different disciplines and is written in various genres from private diaries, poetry and novels to scientific articles. Therefore, Holland and Huggan define travel writing as a "hybrid genre," whose narratives "run from picaresque adventure to philosophical treatise, political commentary, ecological parable, and spiritual quest" (8). Some critics, such as Paul Fussell, prefer a more specific definition of the genre. Fussell defines travel writing as "a sub-species of memoir," and, contrary to novel and romance travel writing, something which "claims literal validity" (*Abroad* 203). By regarding travel writing as an autobiographical genre, Fussell excludes guidebooks and more scientific discourses, and focuses on the "literary'" types of travel writing, which he calls "travel books." Furthermore, by differentiating travel writing from fictional narratives such as novels, Fussell considers travel writing as a non-fiction genre. However, this definition—both introspective and non-fiction at the same time—only includes

travel writing between the nineteenth to early twentieth centuries (Ibid. 21) and disregards the long tradition and richness of the genre.

Reliability and the truth claims of the travel writer have always been questioned by the authorities and the audience, and the differentiation of fact from fiction by both audience and author has created what Thompson calls "epistemological anxiety" since Ancient Greece (29). On the other hand, it was Homer's *Odyssey* which initiated the Western, heroic, masculine travel narrative tradition. The mythic motif of the quest, encounters with the other and the problematic homecoming of Homer's epic influenced travel narration through the ages (Ibid. 35). Certainly, most travel writing is in a non-fiction form, although the travel-related fiction texts, as mentioned earlier, can be considered as travel writing. However, this does not mean that the author's reports have to be objective, authentic and factual. While narrating their observations, travellers reflect their own mindset and cultural background, making the accurateness of the account quite problematic. For instance, during the supposed Age of Discoveries, when the Europeans encountered incomprehensible geographies, animals, plants and peoples, travellers had to associate the unfamiliar beings with something recognizable to their own culture, an association termed by Anthony Pagden as the "principle of attachment" (17). Therefore, as Mary Campbell indicates, these associations "inevitably result in … perverse collages, destroying the coherence of the alien subject in order to transmit a visualizable image" (70).

Due to political and commercial interest during the sixteenth century, explorations and journeys were sponsored and documentation of the discoveries—hence writing—became fundamental for travelling (Holland and Huggan 3). Hence, it can be said that the main initiatives of travelling during the Age of Discoveries were not only curiosity and gaining knowledge as it was the starting point of the European imperialist agenda. The era which is widely recognized as the Age of Discoveries, also termed "early modern travel writing," brought about more pragmatic, empirical ways of travelling, and the "eye-witness" position of the traveller is stressed in the travel accounts (Thompson 40). Nevertheless, because of the epistemological anxieties as well as the problematic depiction of unfamiliar beings, certain regulations for travel writing appeared. In his essay "Of Travel" (1625), Francis Bacon emphasizes the significance of travel writing and establishes certain regulations for the traveller regarding how to report observations which affected travel writing, especially during the eighteenth century. At the beginning of his essay, Bacon advises travellers to keep diaries during their journeys to have more accurate accounts, and continues:

> … he must have some entrance into the language before he goeth. Then he must have such a servant or tutor as knoweth the country … Let him sequester himself from the company of his countrymen … and in his discourse let him be rather advised in his answers, than forward to tell stories; and let it appear that he doth not change his country manners for those of foreign parts; but only prick in some flowers of that he hath learned abroad into the customs of his own country. (49–50)

Bacon encourages the traveller to collect useful data and report it objectively (avoiding the telling of stories) by providing the advice quoted above. Nonetheless, Bacon overlooks the fact that "travel writers are often as much story-tellers as reporters" (Thompson 29). The useful information collected during the journeys was undoubtedly used by Western powers to exploit the rest of the world, disregarding the self-reflexive aspect of travel writing. Therefore, the reliability and authenticity of the accounts without any retrospective narrative were highly important. Following Bacon's steps, the Royal Society was founded in 1660 and published guidelines prioritizing certain categories of data, such as natural-historical and ethnographic information (Ibid 90).

Enlightenment narrative constraints on travel writing demonstrate the connection between science, travel writing and colonialism. Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* (1992) is one of the leading and most significant works drawing attention to this connection. According to Pratt, starting from the second half of the eighteenth century, travel writing was transformed completely: "whether or not an expedition was primarily scientific, or the traveller a scientist, natural history played a part in it. Specimen gathering, the building up of collections, the naming of new species, and the recognition of known ones became standard themes in travel and travel books" (*Imperial Eyes* 27). Pratt calls this systemization of the nature "planetary consciousness," through which Eurocentrism is constructed (Ibid. 15). In accordance with the planetary consciousness, utilitarianism and scientific discourse assured the literary success. By allegedly discovering places that were "already there" (Ibid. 28) and renaming the places with European terms through the gaze of the "lettered, male European" subject (Ibid. 31), the West claimed for power. Thus, since the masculine heroic narrative of classical times, the scientific discourse of travel writing remained male.

As Foucault states: "It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power" (Foucault and Gordon 52). Further, travel writing became an important instrument of creation and dissemination of this corpus of knowledge through which the power is exercised. Showing the complex relationship between power and knowledge, the Foucauldian analysis of power and discourse has become

quintessential for post-colonial studies. Besides Pratt, Said also defines his theory of Orientalism as a discourse through which the West has shaped and dominated the East through the production of knowledge starting from the eighteenth century in his influential work *Orientalism*. However, the colonial discourse is not a stable one; the Western domination over the rest of the world was not only employed through scientific discourse. Therefore, before delving into Foucauldian discourse analysis, colonial discourse and Orientalism, I would like to portray the changes in travel writing in the following stages.

Improvements of infrastructure and transportation increase tourism, and the number of female travellers expanded because it was more convenient and created different kinds of travelling. Accordingly, Thompson asserts that, due to the growth of tourism, travel writing had an inward turn; most of the travellers adapted more literary modes of travel writing "to distinguish the author from the more vulgar touristic 'herd'," which he terms "anti-touristic rhetoric" (54). This brings us back to Fussell's definition of the literary modes of travel writing as "the creative mediation between fact and fiction" (*Abroad* 214). Consequently, as stated previously, travel writing has become a medium of the exploration of "selfhood and identity" (Thompson 99). Moreover, Pratt also demonstrates the emergence of "personal experience and adventure" in travel writing, as well as "a narrative of geographical discovery, observation, or collection" (*Imperial Eyes* 75). However, according to Pratt, the emergence of the sentimental modes of travel writing emerged after the French Revolution due to the need for the legitimation of imperialistic deeds (Ibid. 74); instead of replacing and opposing each other, sentimental and scientific modes of travel writing are complementary (Ibid. 39). By means of sentimental writing, European powers conveyed the notion of scientific racial superiority and the civilizing mission (Ibid. 74); these characteristics continued to represent "Europeanness, maleness, and middle classness," just like the scientific travel writing (Ibid. 77). The emergence of the new modes of travel writing also coincides with the increase of female travellers and, consequently, female travel writing; yet, although female travel writing has always been associated with the sentiments, the female traveller could not fit into the role of Pratt's sentimental hero.

The "increasing ease of locomotion" not only increased tourism but is an important signifier for the expansion of empires and trade (Carr 70). Starting from the mid-nineteenth century, travel writing had another duty—writing "the peak moments at which geographical 'discoveries' were 'won' for England" for the British public; in other words, the "monarch-of-all-I-survey scene" (*Imperial Eyes* 201). The density, richness and literariness of the travel narrative increased, and the aesthetic qualities of the discovered places became the main focus of the texts. Apart from Pratt, Batten also points out the changing tendencies within travel

writing by stating that while in the eighteenth-century architecture was described primarily by the travellers, the tendency gradually shifted towards the "poetic qualities" of the landscape (Batten 97). He also states that the landscape, once serving utilitarian purposes, became "a source of amusement for the traveller and his readers" (Ibid. 99). Pratt, as opposed to Batten, once more correlates these narrative changes and the colonial enterprise: "the esthetic qualities of the landscape constitute the social and material value of the discovery to the explorers' home culture, at the same time as its esthetic deficiencies suggest a need for social and material intervention by the home culture" (*Imperial Eyes* 205). One of the rules of this Victorian rhetoric is having the local people as guides and continuing the exploration of what is already familiar for those people and illustrating it through "promontory descriptions" (Ibid. 202). The "monarch-of-all-I-survey" explorer-hero, exactly like the previous traditions, is masculine; the "Explorer-man paints/possesses the newly unveiled landscape-woman" (Ibid. 213). On the other hand, many Victorian female travel writers such as Mary Kingsley and Isabella Bird adopted the monarch-of-all-I-survey attitude in their writings, as did the twentieth-century example Freya Stark. Even though these women adapted a male role in their writings, the constraints of gender created many conflicts within their narrative. Yet, according to Pratt the role is not available for the female travellers at all; she considers that the scarcity of female exploration writing is an indicator of this situation, which is proven to be wrong by many writers such as Sara Mills (*Discourses of Difference* 1991), Billie Melman (*Women's Orients* 1992), Shirley Foster (*An Anthology of Women's Travel Writing* 2002) and Lisa Lowe (*Critical Terrains* 1991).

The conventions of travel writing were shaped throughout the centuries and gradually became more subjective and less didactic, as can be seen above. Helen Carr claims that, especially between 1880 and 1940, travel writing became more like a memoir focusing on the impressions and apprehensions of the traveller themselves, and the didactic forms of travel writing were mostly produced for academia rather than the public (74). Moreover, Carr demonstrates that, due to the changes that modernism brought and the globalization of the world, the traveller's representation of the other was transformed as well: "Travel writers became increasingly aware that they were describing fragmented, hybridized cultures, the shabby remnants of the tapestry of otherness their predecessors had woven" (Ibid.). Despite being aware of the hybridity and fragmentation, travellers did not simply wholeheartedly accept this situation; similar to the romantic approach of getting off the beaten track to avoid tourism, travellers of this era, who penned what Carr terms as "salvage travel writing," worried about the fact that the Western influence was destroying Eastern races and cultures (Ibid.). To this

Carr applies R. L. Stevenson's term of "salvage anthropology," which refers to the era of "ethnographers who felt their subjects were rapidly disappearing from the globe" (Ibid.). On the other hand, these Orientalist ethnographers (as well as the travellers) do not consider their complicity with this situation (Ibid.117). Similarly, the recurrent "noble savage" tradition (Thompson 150) (examples can also be seen from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) frequently occurs in these travel writings; compared to the city dweller, who is the hybrid colonized, the depiction of untamed nomads is highly romanticized. However, being considered as "noble" does not enable the element of Western superiority to be discarded, and does not eliminate the fact that those travellers are also the part of the colonization, globalization and hybridity. The attitude towards otherness, therefore, changed from making the other resemble the self (the civilization mission) to the celebration of differences. At this point, Bhabha's theorization on hybridity helps us to comprehend the instability and heterogeneity of the colonial identities and allows us to have a better understanding about the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, especially during the age of modernism.

Cocker says that "travel is one of the greatest doors to human freedom, and the travel book is a medium through which humans celebrate this freedom" (260). However, Said's *Orientalism* altered the reception of travel writing by pointing out how it (alongside other texts) promoted the imperialist ideology at home and constructed the image of the other. On the other hand, the process of reporting the other and establishing the authority over the colonized was not static; technological developments, politics and social transformations resulted in the instability of conventions and constraints of travel writing. Although the relationship between colonialism and travel writing had always been permanent, the way the travellers narrated their encounters with difference was quite varied. Foucault's discourse theory, which is applied by many post-colonial academics as I will examine in the following chapter, is very useful to understanding the relationship between power and knowledge, the significance of representation and the changing characteristics of travel writing.

2.1 Foucauldian Discourse Theory and Colonial Discourse

The emergence of structuralism during the mid-twentieth century altered the valorization and the reading of texts from being regarded as "simple communications from writers to readers" into "structures constructed from various elements available from their social and cultural 'paradigm'" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 16–17). Consequently, the text became more than the

representation of the world by the authors without any interplay of variables such as race, gender and class. Following these changes within contemporary theories, poststructuralism agreed on the constructiveness of the texts but denied the structuralist claim that "a structure could arrive at a final meaning" (Ibid. 17). Consequently, both structuralist and poststructuralist theory changed the perception of language. As Sara Mills explains:

> Rather than seeing language as simply expressive, as transparent, as a vehicle of communication, as a form of representation, structuralist theorists and in turn post-structuralists saw language as a system with its own rules and constraints, and within its own determining effect on the way that individuals think and express themselves. (*Discourse* 7)

The changing perception of the language, representation and the texts greatly influenced recent literary theories. The poststructuralist Michel Foucault, through examining the questions about power, knowledge and the subject in his works *Madness and Civilization* (1961), *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality* (1976–84), particularly shaped post-colonial and gender studies. Foucault is not only relevant for travel writing studies to analyse these notions; another contribution of the poststructuralist reading to the literary criticism is that "so-called creative writing as something essentially separate from and superior to writing of other kinds" is not fetishized anymore (*Haunted Journeys* 19). This refreshing attitude towards reading literary works changed the reception of travel writing, which was regarded as a non-literary form of writing, as demonstrated earlier through Fussell's definition.

The most important aspect and the usefulness of Foucault's work is how he points out the relationship between power, knowledge and the subject instead of dealing with them separately. Foucault refuses the idea of power, which can be possessed by certain groups of people and institutions; instead, he concentrates on how power functions in daily life. Foucault defines power as "omnipresent" and states that "power is not an institution, not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (*Sexuality* 93). Also, he underscores the issue of knowledge as being inextricably bound with power: "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (*Discipline* 27). Through demonstrating the complexity of the deployment of power upon individuals and organizations, Foucault rejects

the structuralist binary opposition[3] of the oppressor and the oppressed. Therefore, Foucault regards power not as an instrument of oppression and control but as something "which functions in a form of a chain … exercised through net-like organization" (*Power/knowledge* 98).

According to Foucault, power is not exercised externally but through power-relations:

> I am not referring to Power with a capital P, dominating and imposing its rationality upon the totality of the social body. In fact, there are power relations. They are multiple; they have different forms, they can be in play in family relations, or within an institution, or an administration. (*Politics, Philosophy, Culture* 38)

Hence, power relationships are not necessarily based on the oppressor and the oppressed because they occur in every part of the society. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault describes the complexity of the exercise of power through the model of eighteenth-century philosopher Jeremy Bentham's prison, the Panopticon, where the inmates can be observed without seeing the observer (200). Accordingly, the subject behaves as if they were continuously being observed. According to Mills, the Panopticon is one of the Foucauldian ideas influencing post-colonial studies with a new understanding of the operations of power. Mills draws a parallel between Pratt's monarch-of-all-I-survey scene and the depiction of the landscape "usually from a position of elevation on a hilltop": "a particular surveying gaze by the British traveler or colonial official can be seen to be both a place of observation and discipline, as well as the locus for the production of knowledge about future colonial development" (*Foucault* 46). As previously explained based on Pratt's study, the Foucauldian reading of power reveals the complicity of travel writing, showing how travel writing disseminated the imperialistic mind-set and justified the colonial actions apart from the state, politicians and military power. This notion of power as a result influenced post-colonial studies since it created a new way of considering the relationship between colonizer and the colonized; instead of imposing power over passive indigenous people through physical violence, the domination is established through the production of knowledge which is termed "power/knowledge" by Foucault (*Power/knowledge* 74). Regulations of travel writing by certain institutions and the importance of scientific discourse are once again understood as constituting a domination strategy beyond the production of the author.

[3] Binarism originates from the French structuralist linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure explained that objects have meaning by their opposition to the other signs instead of referring to a real object. Later, Derrida challenged this structuralist position, demonstrating "instead that language is a system of differences in which signification of meaning is perpetually deferred and cannot be reduced to any structure" (Morton 18). Therefore, Derrida is an important influence for those who criticised *Orientalism* due to its homogeneity.

What are these strategic regulations being used to exercise power over the East? In the light of the key Foucauldian concept of discourse, Edward Said defines Orientalism as a discourse by which the West ruled over and even created the Orient ideologically, politically and imaginatively (*Orientalism* 3). Hence, understanding Foucault's concept of discourse is essential to understanding Edward Said's theory of Orientalism as a discourse. Foucault states that discourse stands for "the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a result of regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements" (*Archaeology* 80). Discourses are not only assertions and texts; they should have consistency and unity which are usually regulated by certain social and political parameters through the power relations illustrated above. Rather than the language itself, discourse corresponds to the structures regulating the language and enabling the circulation of certain types of statements while excluding others. Through this circulation, discourse regulates the way individuals think, write and create; in other words, discourse forms our perception of the world. As Foucault explains, "all manifest discourse is secretly based on an already-said" (Ibid. 25). Thus, it can be said that all the travel books written are also based on previous travel books. Further, Foucault claims that "[d]iscourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (*Sexuality* 101). Therefore, once again the power is not exercised directly by the oppressor through discourse, and discourse is also an element of production of power itself, containing the possibility of resistance within it.

On the other hand, despite the possibility of resistance and explaining oneself outside of discourse, this can result in the rest of the society considering one as "mad or incomprehensible" (*Foucault* 54). The problematic nature of the credibility and reliability of the travel writer, as stated earlier, shows the connection between the truth statements and power. To break away from the long-lasting association of the traveller with storytellers, travellers had to follow certain regulations established by the Western educated male authorities and produced their texts depending on certain constraints. As a result, the "marginal" voices are excluded from the mainstream discourses. In *Madness and Civilization* (1967), Foucault explains how the voices of those people are neglected and ignored (*Foucault* 58). Considering this accessibility and authority to produce knowledge, one can realize the reason why female travel writers had been considered as eccentric and exceptions. Besides, Foucault emphasizes the fact that discourses are not static. These discursive constraints and tendencies within texts can be understood with what Foucault terms as episteme: "By episteme, we mean … the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological

figures, sciences …" (*Archaeology* 191). Therefore, Foucault's episteme is useful for understanding the constraints on the production of travel writing. Besides, by limiting episteme to a particular time, Foucault demonstrates the instability of the parameters affecting the production of the texts. Hence, texts should be considered as heterogonous constructions, and this explains the discursive transformations of travel writing throughout the centuries, even decades. Consequently, a Foucauldian reading allows for the questioning of the validity of the truth statements and "scientific accounts" of the travellers, regarding them as "representational practices" (*Discourses of Difference* 68).

Consequently, Foucault's concept of power/knowledge enabled gender and post-colonial studies to investigate how power operates in the production of knowledge. Foucault claims that "if 'marginality' is being constituted as an area of investigation, this is only because relations of power have established it as a possible object" (qtd. in *Outside in the Teaching Machine* 65). Highly similar to the imbalanced relationship between men and women (for example, in her fictional essay "A Room of One's Own" (1929), Virginia Woolf describes the British Library as being full of books written by men (7)), an immense amount of knowledge about the East and the colonized has been produced in the West by Western scholars. Through the production of this knowledge, the West secured its dominance over the colonized people, as can be seen in Pratt's analysis of travel books explained earlier. Said analysed the unequal relationship between the East and West by focusing not only on travel books like Pratt but the entire body of Western literature and how this intertextuality established colonial discourse. Accordingly, Mills defines colonial discourse as something that "does not … simply refer to a body of texts with similar subject-matter, but rather refers to a set of practices and rules which produced those texts and the methodological organisation of thinking underlying them" (*Discourse* 95). Thus, Said's analysis of colonial discourse in *Orientalism* revealed the role of overtly or implicitly racist texts' roles within imperialism and the discursive constraints that shaped the production of these texts.

2.2 Edward Said's *Orientalism* and its Criticisms

Edward Said was born in Palestine and educated in British-American schools in the Middle East. His work *Orientalism* is quintessential for post-colonialism or colonial discourse studies. Spivak, one of the most influential scholars within post-colonial studies, refers to *Orientalism* as a "source book in our discipline" (*Outside in the Teaching Machine* 61). Moreover, the other

prominent figure of post-colonial studies, Bhabha, recognizes the great influence of Said in *The Location of Culture* (1994): "I want here to acknowledge the pioneering oeuvre of Said which provided me with a critical terrain and an intellectual project …" (ix). Therefore, it is unthinkable that colonial discourse could be discussed without considering *Orientalism*.

Through a Foucauldian lens, Said exposes the complicity of Western academia and literature, with European colonialism starting from around the eighteenth century (*Orientalism* 3). Correspondingly, Thompson also demonstrates that, in the eighteenth century, travel writing had a scientific turn and the Royal Society created strict standards for it to be objective, non-personal and trustworthy (Thompson 78). These discursive constraints were not only established by institutions like the Royal Society, but were also related to the intertextual nature of discourse, as mentioned previously. Therefore, by examining the recurring representations in the academic and literary texts of the colonized countries and the representations of the Orient, Said points out that colonial discourse does not depend on the individual author's beliefs or ideas but is rather a strategy constructed through discursive foundations.

By focusing on the colonizer's representations of the colonized "other," parallels can be drawn with first-wave feminism where the sexism in male texts was analysed (*Discourses of Difference* 55). Representations of the Orient and recurrent images of them play an important role in the construction of the "inferior" Orient and the "superior" West. Hence, Orientalist discourse constructs binary oppositions regarding the Self and the Other. The Orient is repeatedly described with negative adjectives, putting the Europeans in the higher position. Said states that:

> The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilisations and languages, its cultural contestant and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe … as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. (*Orientalism* 1)

Thus, according to Said, by creating the image of the colonized as lazy, illogical and exotic, the West constructs the image of the Self as the active, powerful and the familiar, indicating the asymmetrical power relations between the East and West. Each written piece of material strengthened these stereotypes and produced the notion of the Orient through discourse. Consequently, the Orient becomes a homogenized entity through generalizations, and in travel books these examples can frequently be seen (Ibid. 58). From their brief encounters on the road and the inadequacy of the knowledge about the Other, travellers generalize what they observe; yet, because of their role within the colonialist agenda, as explained earlier, their generalizations

are considered as "facts" and "knowledge" based on the Foucauldian idea of power/knowledge. In other words, both the Orient and the Occident are "man-made" (Ibid. 5), which is termed "imaginative geography" (Ibid. 49). Hence, Said demonstrates that geography is not solely a "natural" science, but also has cultural significance. One of the recurring stereotypes about the East is its timelessness. While the West is the realm of science and progress, "Orientalism assumed an unchanging Orient" (Ibid. 96). Thus, along with the depiction of the Orient as backward and primitive, the interest and appreciation of the great ancient civilizations of the Orient are visible in these texts. The Orient becomes a static entity with a glamorous and decayed past.

Said does not focus on openly racist statements; as seen in Pratt, he emphasizes the legitimizing function of the colonial discourse. Apart from the representations and the stereotypes circulating throughout the Western canon of literature, *Orientalism* deals with how the production of knowledge established and justified Western domination. According to Said, "no production of knowledge in the human sciences can ever ignore and disclaim its author's involvement as a human subject in his own circumstances" (Ibid. 11). Regarding the colonialist framework, Orientalist discourse is interlocked with the production of knowledge. Moreover, Said contends that when the group of texts are reiterated and institutionalized by the academia and government, they "can create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe" (Ibid. 94). Nevertheless, the critic does not claim that all representations are false and do not include any truth: "One ought never to assume that the structure of Orientalism is nothing more than a structure of lies or of myths which, were the truth about them to be told … [it would be seen that] Orientalism is more particularly valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient …" (Ibid. 15). In other words, Said stresses the operation of power through knowledge and discourse instead of trying to reveal the truth about the Orient.

Another striking aspect of Orientalism is that it is a gendered discourse. The binary division of East and West is once again established by portraying the East as the passive and the feminine, so that the West can be the active and strong masculine. The Oriental men are represented as insufficiently male and the Oriental women are represented as seductive, exotic and sensual (*Orientalism* 195). For instance, through the relationship between Flaubert and the Egyptian dancer Kuchuk Hanem, the imbalanced power relations, the gendered discourse and the construction of the feminine Orient is demonstrated:

> There is very little consent to be found … she never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence, or history. He spoke for and represented her. … these historical facts of domination … allowed him not only to possess

> Kuchuk Hanem physically but to speak for her and tell his readers in what way she was "typically Oriental." (Ibid. 6)

Moreover, it is not only the individuals that are feminized but also the landscape. As can be seen in the Pratt's monarch-of-all-I-survey scene, the Oriental land is the empty, virgin place waiting to be "discovered" by the Western male. That is, the East becomes penetrable by the Western masculine explorer (Ibid. 206), making Orientalism "an exclusively male province" (209).

By portraying the dialectics of the East and the West—the Self and the Other—and indicating the formation of binary oppositions through Orientalist discourse, Said establishes a totalizing and homogenous theory criticized by many contemporary feminist and post-colonial scholars. Challenging Said's Orientalism but still acknowledging the immense contribution of his theory, Ali Behdad (*Belated Travellers* 1994), Homi Bhabha (*The Location of Culture* 1994), Sara Mills (*Discourses of Difference* 1991), Reina Lewis (*Rethinking Orientalism* 2004), Dennis Porter ("Orientalism and its Problems" 1982) and many others have emphasized the heterogeneity of colonial discourse and the representations because of its being intertwined with gender, class and race. In "India through re-Orientalist Lenses," moreover, through the concept of re-Orientalism, which is defined as the "'orientally' generated discourse coming out of the post-colonial and diasporic legacies," Ana Cristina Mendes and Lisa Lau demonstrate the complexity of the discourse, rather than relying on the binary oppositions of the East and West (707). By using Foucault's poststructuralist approach, Said has a structuralist approach in Orientalism. This created certain problems in terms of applying Foucault; for instance, Orientalism is criticized because of its being ahistorical. Dennis Porter claims that: "Unlike Foucault, who posits not a continuous discourse over time but epistemological breaks between different periods, Said asserts the unified character of Western discourse on the Orient over some two millennia, a unity derived from a common and continuing experience of fascination with and threat from the East, of its irreducible otherness" ("Orientalism and its problems" 181). Thus, in spite of being accurate about illustrating the representations of the Orient through which the West establishes domination, Said's representations are often criticized as being monolithic.

Bhabha examines the colonialist discourses in an unsteady, ambivalent and heterogeneous way. Bhabha agrees with Said regarding the goal of colonial discourse when he states: "The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction" (101). Nonetheless, according to Bhabha this

objective cannot entirely be met. Previously, Pagden's "principle of attachment" was mentioned to point out that travellers had to transform something incomprehensible into a comprehensible thing, for example through simile, but at the same time Said has shown us that the West established authority through othering. Bhabha states:

> Racist stereotypical discourse … inscribes a form of governmentality that is informed by a productive splitting in its constitution of knowledge and exercise of power. Some of its practices recognize the difference of race, culture and history as elaborated by stereotypical knowledges, racial theories, administrative colonial experience, and on that basis institutionalize a range of political and cultural ideologies … However, there coexist within the same apparatus of colonial power, modern systems and sciences of government, progressive 'Western' forms of social and economic organization which provide the manifest justification for the project of colonialism. (Ibid. 118)

Since the beginning of the tradition of travel writing, the encounters with the other were always represented as strange, exotic and unfamiliar, and those representations of otherness constructed the sense of superiority to the Europeans. Moreover, the same sense of superiority led the Europeans to justify their exploitation through the civilizing mission. In other words, while the colonizers reiterated the inferiority and the otherness of the colonized, they also attempted to make the colonized look alike through the civilizing mission. Hence, Bhabha argues: "despite the 'play' in the colonial system which is crucial to its exercise of power, colonial discourse produces the colonized as a social reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible" (Ibid. 101). Meanwhile, through stereotypes, colonizers created a bigger gap between the East and West, but at the same time, through "the principle of attachment" and cultural assimilation, the gap was lessened.

On the one hand, Bhabha agrees with Said and states that the colonial discourse is full of "terrifying stereotypes of savagery, cannibalism, lust and anarchy" (Ibid. 104), while at the same time emphasizing the fact that they are harmless and familiarized. In a way, the stereotypes are used to stabilize the precarious identity of the "other." By doing this, the colonizer fails to construct the colonizer both as the other and the familiar, and the Oriental subject becomes "almost the same but not quite," which is termed as "mimicry" (Ibid. 122). This indicates the unstable identity of the colonizer as well. Therefore, instead of considering this operation of power in a stable way, Bhabha focuses on the ambivalent and contradictory nature of it. Through reconsidering a Saidian application of colonial power relations, Bhabha also includes the agency of the colonized—the resemblance of the colonizer to the colonized generates anxiety in the colonizer. As previously stated, Foucault's concept of power demonstrates that power is not something that is directly exercised upon individuals. However,

Bhabha argues that: "There is always, in Said, the suggestion that colonial power and discourse is possessed entirely by the colonizer, which is a historical and theoretical simplification" (qtd. in Huddart 27). Said focuses on the binarism between East and West, and emphasizes the image of the Orient as a passive figure completely opposite to the West. Yet, Bhabha recognizes that the colonial subject wants to establish stably opposed identities between East and West and, as a poststructuralist, claims that the final image of neither Self nor the Other is possible.

Although Bhabha gives us an alternative way of considering the power relations between the colonizer and the colonized, he is as much criticized as Said in terms of gender-blindness. In *Orientalism*, the feminization of the Orient and the objectification and erotization of the Oriental women can be seen. Anne McClintock writes:

> imperialism cannot be understood without a theory of gender power. Gender power was not the superficial patina of empire, an ephemeral gloss over the more decisive mechanisms of class and race. Rather, gender dynamics were, from the outset fundamental to the securing and maintenance of the imperial enterprise. (6–7)

However, Said disregards the female contribution to Orientalism, which is, according to many critics as previously mentioned, a result of the homogeneity and unified objects of Said's colonial discourse definition. Pratt, as explained earlier, does not reject the female participation in the construction of the colonial discourse, but she claims that the masculine adventurer-hero role is not available for women at all due to the lack of female explorer writing, which many scholars have contested. In *Orientalism*, female participation in the colonial discourse is neglected, and female colonial writing is almost excluded from Said's study with only a few exceptions, such as the writer Gertrude Bell (1868–1926). On the other hand, Bhabha's concept of ambivalence is quite helpful for considering the instability of the colonizer as much as the colonized; the female traveller, instead of not being eligible for the masculine hero role of the colonial discourse, can be understood through the complex power relationship Bhabha provides. Nevertheless, he is as frustrating as Foucault and Said in terms of gender-blindness. Another post-colonial critic, Spivak, as a reaction against the gender-blindness of these theories, pointed out the importance of gender in colonial discourse in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1983).

Spivak is a post-colonial scholar who was born in Calcutta. Spivak's main concern, who defines herself as a "practical deconstructionist feminist Marxist" (qtd. in Disch and Hawkesworth 108), is the issues of gender and race—especially the silence and absence of women (Morton 7). Spivak also criticizes the homogenizing characteristic of *Orientalism* and

has a deconstructionist approach through the binary oppositions as well (Ibid. 4). Spivak has become an important figure in post-colonial studies through her translation of Derrida's *Of Grammatology* and her well-known essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Even though, once again, Derrida's influence on colonial discourse studies can be seen, *Orientalism* is in the base; Spivak also believes that textuality was used as a means of justifying the imperial expansion. Moreover, Spivak's term "epistemic violence," referring to the use of European knowledge as an instrument of colonial domination, shows Said's significance. Spivak argues that "[t]he clearest available example of … epistemic violence is the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other" ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 76). Nevertheless, instead of focusing on the unified "otherness" of the Orient, Spivak questions the fixed notions of the colonizer and the colonized. In her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Spivak addresses the issues of marginal subjects, for instance the oppressed women (subalterns) in the colonized society and their empowerment. Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci regularly uses the term "subaltern" to point out a subordinate position due to race, class and gender.[4] Spivak adopts Gramsci's term in her text, demonstrating the way the identity of subaltern women is established as a quiet and non-existent figure compared to the bourgeois or male colonized. Therefore, instead of analysing the power of the oppressor and the representation of the oppressed by the oppressor, as can be seen in first-wave feminism and Said's *Orientalism*, this time the main concern is the voice of the colonized, the oppressed, which can also be observed in more contemporary/intersectional feminism such as in Spivak's and Butler's works.

Spivak contends: "In the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, and the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (Ibid. 83–4). The theorist not only includes the significance of gender and class in colonial discourse, but raises the question of race and class in feminism regarded as intersectional feminism. Hence, Spivak rejects the unified representation of the colonized as the Other and stresses the "subaltern" position of women and the working class. Further, Spivak gives an iconic example in the banning of the Sati practice by the British colonizers to portray the situation of women within the colonized society. In the Sati tradition, the widow sacrifices herself after the death of her husband to show her loyalty. This practice was made illegal by the British colonizers, as Spivak explains, to "save brown women from brown men" (Ibid. 93). Once more, the colonizers justify their deeds and presence through their civilizing mission. As opposed to the British

[4] In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci defines the term subaltern as "'subordinate' … or sometimes 'instrumental' to denote '[n]on hegemonic groups or classes'" (xiv).

regulation, the nativists claimed that: "The women actually wanted to die" (Ibid. 93). None of these discourses allowed the women to speak for themselves, and instead they asserted homogenous ideas regarding what women actually wanted. Therefore, at the end of the essay, Spivak answers the question: "The subaltern cannot speak" (Ibid. 104).

Besides her criticism of colonial discourse, Spivak's contribution to intersectional feminism and her criticism of the "First World Feminism" should be discussed. In the essay "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" (1985), Spivak reminds the audience of the importance of colonial discourse in nineteenth-century British literature, and criticizes feminist approaches disregarding it: "It seems particularly unfortunate when the emergent perspective of feminist criticism reproduces the axioms of imperialism" (243). Spivak emphasizes the complicity of bourgeois female individualism and the Western feminist readings of Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* (1847). Many feminists consider Jane Eyre to be a proto-feminist, praising her self-determination and portraying her as an empowered Western woman. On the other hand, Bertha Mason[5] and her cultural background are excluded as she is used to establish a stable identity for Jane through the reiteration of stereotypes. Spivak explains: "In this fictive England, she [Bertha Mason] must play out her role, act out the transformation of her 'self' into the fictive Other, set fire to the house and kill herself, so that Jane Eyre can become the feminist individualist heroine of British fiction" (Ibid. 251) As a result, Spivak demonstrates that the construction of gender identity is highly related to the colonial discourse, and the Western female is recognized as superior to the Oriental female. Similar to Spivak's Jane Eyre reading and criticism of the proto-feminist representation of Jane Eyre, in *Discourses of Difference* (1991) Sara Mills points out the problematic approach, the proto-feminist reading of the female travel writers, although she does not refer to Spivak. According to Bird, the "close study of their [colonialist] text reveals that there are more exceptions and diversity in the works of individual writers, and particularly in women's travel writing, than Said's earlier theory acknowledges" (12). Besides, many other writers, such as Meyda Yeğenoğlu, Lisa Lowe, and Billie Melman, have focused on the significance of gender and class in travel writing as much as race. In the following chapter, I will examine the relationship between travel writing and gender studies in the light of female travel writing.

[5] Bertha Mason is a fictional character in Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* (1847), who is Edward Rochester's first wife. Mason's Jamaican heritage and insaneness are highlighted in the work.

3. Female Travel Writing

> … as a woman, I have no country. As a woman, I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world.
> —Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (109)

Before discussing the specifics of travel writing, it is necessary to point out the connections between post-colonial and gender studies. I have mentioned the similar possible link between Woolf and Said in terms of analysing how the production of knowledge results in the construction of marginality and otherness, in that they both focus on the representation of the "other" by the Self. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin state: "Feminist and post-colonial discourses both seek to reinstate the marginalized in the face of the dominant, and early feminist theory, like early nationalist post-colonial criticism sought to invert the structures of domination, substituting, for instance a female tradition or traditions in place of a male-dominated canon" (*Empire Writes Back* 173). Therefore, it can be said that post-colonialism and feminism share a homologous concern with domination and the authority of the Western/male subject. According to this reading, the female subjection in patriarchal society correlates to the subjection of the East in colonial discourse. However, despite being oppressed by the same institutions, the complicity of female travellers with imperialism is undeniable. In parallel with this connection, Indira Gose explains the position of female travellers by referring to them as "colonized by gender but colonizers by race" (qtd. in Thompson 194). Female travel writing is hence a valuable medium to explore the intersection of gender, class and race instead of analysing them separately.

The major criticism of Said is the fact that he does not take the gender factor into consideration. In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Said acknowledges the criticisms and efforts of feminist critics who "demonstrate the diversity and complexity of experience that works beneath the totalizing discourses of Orientalism and of Middle East (overwhelmingly male) nationalism" (xiv). However, as Bird states, Said "still fails to analyse the role of women's travel writing in such a process" (19). One cannot claim that, on the other hand, the only problematic is the post-colonial studies, as Spivak shows us how feminists do not take the race factor into consideration. Just as in recent post-colonial studies, contemporary feminists also avoided oversimplified and homogenous readings of texts such as Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Undoing Gender* (2004), which I will explain later in this chapter. Not only the main concerns but also the development of both disciplines have been somewhat parallel. As a result of these developments, the aim of female travel writing studies has been to find new

tools to analyse and have a better understanding of the female participation in imperialism. In *Haunted Journeys* (1991), Porter deliberately does not include any of the travel writing by women. Porter explains this choice by declaring:

> my decision to focus exclusively on male writers was rather the consequence of the surprising discovery, surprising to me at least, that the father/son relationship was a central, though often submerged, topos of so many of the texts I am concerned with. To deal adequately with the complex motivations that drive women to travel or at least to write about the world, therefore, requires a separate book that would have to be theorized differently. (17)

Relatedly, Reina Lewis states, "sources need to be analysed as mediated representations, not neutral evidence, and this can be done through a mixture of historicized materialist and textual analysis that attends among other things to matters of genre, market, narrative strategy and reception" (6). Following this, female travel writing—Freya Stark's travel writing specifically—will be examined considering the limitations of writing, publishing and the public response.

In the search for new tools to have a comprehensive analysis of the texts, Foucault is once again considered to be useful. Both post-colonial and gender studies deal with representation, language and subject construction through discourse. For both disciplines, Foucauldian concepts of discourse and power-knowledge have been central to analysing the power dynamics. Nonetheless, not every feminist scholar considers Foucault's ideas as useful for feminist criticism, the lack of addressing gender in his works and the problems of applying poststructuralism to active politics being the main reasons for this (McLaren 1). Yet, Foucault's influence on feminism is undeniable. On the one hand, Caroline Ramazanoğlu points out the problematics of using Foucauldian concepts of power, discourse, identity and knowledge; on the other, she acknowledges its inevitability by stating that, "Feminism cannot afford to ignore Foucault, because the problems he addresses and the criticisms he makes of existing theories and their political consequences identify problems in and for feminism" (3). If that is so, can Foucauldian analysis be useful for the analysis of female travel writing? As for Mills, for her analysis of female travel writing in *Discourses of Difference* she prefers going back to Foucault instead of using Said's Orientalism, considering the Foucauldian concept of discourse as a heterogeneous term instead of Said's monolithic usage of it (8). Nevertheless, Mills recognizes the contradictions and problems that Foucault's theorization presents for feminist studies and justifies her use of Foucault by stating: "I will be using Foucault's work … as a 'tool-box' and not as totalizing theory, able to explain everything, but rather as a fragmentary theory which is descriptive of changing contexts, and therefore subjects itself to change and re-evaluation"

(Ibid. 7–8). One of the tools from the "tool-box" she uses is the Foucauldian concept of truth, which highlights the main question of the problems of female travel writing. Previously, I explained that travel writing's main concern is the traveller's credibility. Said demonstrated that this is connected to power-knowledge, wherein, through the assertion of truth, the West established domination over the East. Besides, Woolf demonstrated that the production of knowledge was in the hand of men, even the knowledge about women. Thus, how could female travellers have produced knowledge in the East? What was their position within the empire as colonialists?

In spite of all the constraints and repressions, one should not forget that travel, to a certain extent, enabled women to get away from the domestic sphere and challenge the discourses of femininity which constructed their identities. In Bird's book *Travelling in Different Skins* (2012), apart from the discursive constraints on female travel writing, the self-fashioning gender identity of the female travel writers is examined. Bird refers to female travel writing as "vagabondage travelogue" and defines it as:

> … the search for identity through motion, physical and textual elaboration … It emerges as a totemic concept in European women's writing from the 1850s, inciting a reformulation of what it means to be a woman by pushing out the physical, geographical and textual parameters by which "women" are defined. (4)

Through producing travel accounts, they were able to display themselves outside of the domestic sphere and reshape their identities on the road, although they had to negotiate with colonial and patriarchal discourse in this process. As a result, to have a better understanding of female travel writing and its impact on the female travellers as well as the readers in their era, totalizing notions of subject and discourse should be prevented, and the different variables should be considered.

3.1 Negotiating the Pressures of Patriarchy and Imperialism

As stated earlier, Homer's *Odyssey* has been immensely influential for travel writing. Yet, it was not solely significant for travel writing. Many writers have emphasized that in one of the most influential texts of the Western culture, the woman character, Penelope, patiently waits for her husband at home, who is travelling around the globe (Thompson 168, Bassnett 223). The *Odyssey* also reinforced separate spheres, which is fundamental for the patriarchal society to function. Consequently, being on the road and in motion has always been associated with men. Travel writing had a masculine tradition and the women outside of the domestic sphere

were usually presented as "alluring natives or dangerous temptresses, highly eroticized fantasy figures" instead of "fellow travellers" (Thompson 169). Smith observes that, "Ever in the process of becoming 'men,' travellers affirm their masculinity through purposes, activities, behaviours, dispositions, perspectives, and bodily movements displayed on the road, and through the narratives of travel that they return home to the sending culture" (ix). Thus, to travel was also an essential part of constructing a masculine identity and immobility becomes an essential part of being a woman. Nevertheless, women always travelled and recorded their writings by challenging the set of binary constructs, blurring the boundaries of public and domestic spheres, and inevitably by negotiating with the pressures of patriarchy and imperialism. Speaking of imperialism, in the colonial framework women were also regarded as "symbols of home and purity; women as active participants can barely be conceived of" (*Discourses of Difference* 3). Because of this ambivalent nature of female travel writing, structuralist theories such as Orientalism were not able to comprehend the female agency within the colonial context and excluded female travel writing.

In *The Mind of the Traveler* (1991), Eric Leed depicts the male explorer-hero traveller. Fussell, in his travel writing anthology *The Norton Book of Travel* (1987), includes passages from fifty-six travel writers and only four of them are female. More specifically, Fussell refused to include female travel writers in *Abroad: British Literary Travelling Between the Wars* (1979). Freya Stark was a prominent figure, particularly "between the wars," and Fussell justifies his exclusion by stating:

> Someone is sure to ask why I've not dealt with the travel books of Freya Stark, and I will have to answer that to write a distinguished travel book you have to be equally interested in (1) the travel and (2) the writing. In Stark's works, admirable as the travel has been, the dimension of delight in language and disposition, in all the literary contrivances, isn't there. Her reward is due not from criticism but from the Royal Geographical Society. (*Abroad* 197)

Firstly, Fussell acknowledges the importance of Freya Stark since he feels the need to justify himself in not including her. Fussell may think that, against the general opinion, he does not consider Stark's writing as "literary" enough to include in his work. However, this does not justify ignoring female travel writing altogether. The second compelling remark by Fussell concerns Stark's Royal Geographical Society award. The Royal Geographical Society, as previously mentioned, is an important organization which institutionalized travel writing and colonial discourse, at the same time also demonstrating the relationship between them. The same institution did not admit any female members until 1913 and shaped what is regarded as the "masculine adventure-hero" identity through the narrative conventions they introduced

(*Women's Orients* 8). Hence it is utterly contradictory to judge a female travel writer's writing by referring to her award from an institution which is one of the primary elements constraining female mobility and travel writing. If the criticisms female travel writers received from their contemporary writers are considered, the limitations they were facing might be better understood. Regarding his mother, Frances Milton, in *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832), Anthony Trollope comments:

> Thirty years ago my mother wrote a book … That was essentially a woman's book. She saw with a woman's keen eye, and described with a woman's light but graphic pen … But she did not regard it as a part of her work to dilate on the nature … of those political arrangements … Such a work is fitter for a man than for a woman. (1–2)

According to Fussell, the writing was not literary enough and too scientific/political, yet for Trollope the problem was the female's incapability of discussing and analysing important issues such as politics, and that is why travel writing was more suitable for men. By calling *Domestic Manners of the Americans* "essentially a woman's book," Trollope constructs the binary division between male and female writing but, as can be seen from the different reception examples, the issue is not about the inherent characteristics of male travel writing but more about how it was received.

The feminist critic Toril Moi states that male critics underestimate the authority of female writers and the good reviews are full of adjectives making "woman's poetry charming and sweet (as women should be), as opposed to serious and significant (as men are supposed to be)" (35). Thus, the only problem is not female travel writing but female creativity and female writing in general, and if the women were writing they had to write like "a woman," as was expected from their role in the society. The Marxist Feminist Literature Collective emphasizes that: "Female literary production breaks the cultural taboo against women as public speakers, a taboo felt by almost all women who defined themselves as writers" (qtd. in *Discourses of Difference* 40). Therefore, it can be said that female travel writers are trespassing the boundaries of their gender through writing twice—apart from travelling, they are going outside of the physical domestic space. Additionally, Mills emphasizes travel writing's problematic relationship with truth and makes the reader reconsider the constraints over the voice of the female traveller. Compared to male travellers, female travellers were accused of exaggerating and lying more, and therefore the part we should focus on is not the different characteristics of the female and male texts but on their reception (Ibid. 107). Nevertheless, it is not accurate to claim that women were simply outside of those power relations and institutions of the empire,

despite not being allowed to officially work or produce knowledge for the empire. The moment they set foot outside of the domestic sphere and narrated their stories with their own ink within the colonial context, they became a part of it. Many of the female travel writers had a strong imperialist discourse full of racist statements. Trying to take the female travel writing outside of the colonial context would be as essentializing as constructing binary oppositions of female and male travel writing. To emphasize the heterogeneity of female travel writing and the ambivalent position of the female traveller, Mills states:

> In women's travel writing, when women write "like a woman," that is when they adopt elements of the discourses of femininity in their work, they may run the risk of the whole of the text being judged as exaggerated. Furthermore, … if they write texts which do not draw on the discourses of imperialism … they may also be judged to be exaggerating, since their text will clash with other discourses about women. (Ibid. 112)

If the woman traveller uses the feminine discourse in their writings, constantly reaffirming the role of the women within society, they cannot create knowledge or fully become a part of an empire. On the contrary, when they obtain the role of the adventurer-hero with the discourses of imperialism, they continue to be undermined and neglected, resulting in constant "clashes of discourses" within their writing.

Starting with *Orientalism*, post-colonial studies revised and subverted the Western oriented literary canon. Similarly, feminist critics also paid attention to revising and subverting the male-oriented literary canon. According to Adrienne Rich:

> Re-vision—the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes … —is for women more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival … We need to know the writing of the past, and know it differently than we have ever known it; not to pass on a tradition but to break its hold over us. (269)

Therefore, establishing a female tradition of literary writing was an important part of restoring the voice of the female in history, which, as previously stated, started with Virginia Woolf's "A Room of One's Own." Further to Woolf's reading of the representation of women through male authors, Elaine Showalter focuses on the female authorship instead of their representations by male authors with her project called "gynocriticism." Showalter explains that: "Gynocritics begins at the point where we free ourselves from the linear absolutes of male literary history, stop trying to fit women between the lines of male tradition and focus instead on the newly visible world of female culture" (Showalter 131). Considering the underrepresentation of female travel writing in early post-colonial studies and travel writing anthologies—although the issue is not separating the characteristics of male and female writing "as an act of survival,"

to use Rich's words—the tradition of female travel writing was needed to reveal the immense body of work written by female travellers. Not surprisingly, it was the feminist critics who studied and revealed the female travel writing. As opposed to the common idea of recognizing female travellers as eccentrics, marginals and spinsters, these works have proved that there have been too many female travellers in history—especially since the nineteenth century—to be exceptions only. Nonetheless, some of the early readings of the female travel writing by feminist critics and historians were problematic in different senses. For instance, Toril Moi criticizes Showalter's essentialist attitude towards female writing despite acknowledging her effort to revive the forgotten texts of women. According to Moi, gynocriticism results in separating the narrative characteristics of female authors and prioritizing the supposed "authentic human experience" of the authors instead of their texts (75).

Likewise, there were also several feminist critics who have claimed that there are differences between male and female travel writing, making the reading of these texts "more manageable" and enabling "the reader to read the texts within a well-defined framework" (*Discourses of Difference* 28). In *The Illustrated Virago Book of Women Travellers* (2006) published by Virago Press, which is one of the initiators of the rediscovery of female travel writing (as well as other genres), Morris asserts that, "Women move through the world differently than men" (9). Jane Robinson, in her preface to the female travel writer's anthology *Unsuitable for Ladies* (1994), points out the differences between female and male travel writing: "men's travel accounts are to do with What and Where, and women's with How and Why" (xiv). Yet, the separatist approach results in the exclusion of the women who do not fit into the categories presented by the author: are the female travellers proto-feminists or are they imperialists? Female travel writing is too highly heterogeneous for it to be generalized. As Foster and Mills demonstrate:

> it is difficult to generalize about women's travel writing … because it is clear that openly racist statements occur alongside seemingly sympathetic statements; furthermore, such statements within texts serve different purposes according to the different socio-political environments within which they are produced, reviewed and read. (4)

If the authors were not excluded, the useful aspects of their writing were highlighted, preventing the comprehensive reading of these texts. For instance, "the anti-colonialist statements" of the writers were emphasized (*Discourses of Difference* 34). However, female travellers negotiated the obstacles of patriarchy and imperialism in different manners. With writers such as Freya Stark and Gertrude Bell, it is harder to highlight the anti-colonialist statements since they

officially worked for the British Empire, unlike the female travellers from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who were not allowed to have official positions within imperialist institutions. Nonetheless, Mills does not completely reject the shared narrative characteristics of female travel writing, and focuses on why the narrative distinctions occurred (Ibid. 5). To be able to pursue an inclusive study on female travel writing, the discursive pressures of the era and the variables of class and race should be considered as well as gender.

In one of the earliest works on feminism, "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" (1792), Mary Wollstonecraft writes, "A man, when he undertakes a journey, has, in general, the end in view: a woman thinks more of the incidental occurrences, the strange things that may possibly occur on the road; the impression that she may make on her fellow-travellers …" (130). Wollstonecraft, like many other critics, points out the differences between men's and women's travel writing; she would like to criticize the lack of education of women and how it affects all parts of the society. Here, Wollstonecraft ends up praising the male travellers and urges the female travellers to be like them. Nevertheless, there are some issues with this demand; it devalues the distinct characteristics and topics of female travellers, which can be called "discourses of femininity" in Mills' terms. Further, it disregards the discursive constraints placed on the female travellers. As previously stated, science had been an important topic for travel writing, yet for female travellers it was rather a risky topic that they were "advised to approach with caution" (Thompson 182). This can be explained through Said's approach to the concept of many other things besides the "truth," which is itself a "representation" (*Orientalism* 272). According to Said, truth is only a representation within colonial discourse, which is a Foucauldian approach to the concept. Besides, we have seen that through the narrative strategies these representations of assertions of truth were used to establish domination. Yet, Pratt demonstrated that these discourses were not available for women. At this point, Said fails to acknowledge the alternative discourses within Orientalism. Even when they wanted to make scientific statements "like a man," they tended to be "modest" like a woman; it was acceptable for a woman to be interested in botanical science as an amateur, but to show expertise through a scientific discourse in the same scientific field would have created problems in finding publishing opportunities (Thompson 182). Due to their position within the society, the constraints on female education and the pressures on publishing, the declaration of truth had become something most of the female travellers avoided. When they were adopting a scientific tone in their language, the discourses of femininity, the unassertive voice of the female, interrupted this assertive voice of the scientific discourse.

According to Mills, the Foucauldian idea of text production enables us to see all the texts as heterogeneous, rejecting the view that the texts solely originate from the subject (*Discourses of Difference* 69). Through Foucauldian text analysis, Mills criticizes the biographical readings of female travel writing and suggests that these readings "should be seen as an attempt to deny women the status of creators of cultural artefacts" (Ibid. 12). Hence, based on Foucault, Mills primarily questions the role of authorship and points out that although the role of the author, regardless of sex and genre, is not central, the reception of female authorship tends to be more autobiographical. The very problematic nature of the female authorship appears once more since women were expected to write in an autobiographical form. Linda Anderson demonstrates that due to the fact that women were not encouraged to write in general, they chose genres which were not so valued (Anderson 60). Considering this statement and the prolific contribution of women to travel writing, it is also not surprising that women chose travel writing to justify their authorship. For instance, in Freya Stark's biography *Passionate Nomad* (1999), Geneisse notes:

> When she was twenty-six, Freya's talent was already unmistakable. These stories are beautifully crafted, evoking not only the impact of the war but also the powerful physical feelings and passionate disappointment she felt over her lover's rejection. Yet in the end Freya moved away from fiction as if she had concluded that her travel writing and essays were a safer medium. (48)

As an accomplished writer in fiction, Stark chose to write non-fiction texts because it was less risky for her. This might be rather conflicting with my previous statement regarding the reception of travel writing as factual. When the discourses of the "masculine" tradition of travel writing are examined, the eye-witness status of the male hero, the so-called truth statements and the production of knowledge, it is clear that their travel writing had to be "non-fictional" as well. Hence, the biographical details of the masculine hero were supressed, the focus was on the observations and the representations of the other that was narrated through the narrative strategies allowing them to produce knowledge. On the other hand, although female travellers also included their observations and represented the other in their texts in a non-fiction form, their larger-than-life personas interfered with their writings. As Thompson suggests, "Even in the nineteenth century, when female authorship generally had become more acceptable, it remained common for women travel writers to adopt an epistolary or diary format, and by this means to suggest that their observations were never originally intended for publication" (180). Hence, even when they produced non-fiction texts, they were not able to adapt the masculine forms of non-fiction texts, and even choosing a genre was related to the reception of their texts.

For instance, Lady Mary Wortley Montague's *Turkish Embassy Letters* (1763), written in the early eighteenth century, is a collection of her private letters which was not intended for publication in the beginning. Only through emphasizing that her travel writings were private and not intended for public reading could Mary Wortley Montague justify her authorship.

On the other hand, Robinson's statement contradicts this argument. She claims that women travellers "can afford to be more discursive, more impressionable, more ordinary" due to the fact that they were not financed by the institutions and do not "need to satisfy a patron or professional reputation" (xii). This claim assumes that women were excluded from the effects of the power-relations and were freer to accept the discursive constraints demonstrated earlier, which directed them to write in a "more ordinary" way. Similarly, Billie Melman states in her book *Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718–1918: Sexuality, Religion and Work* (1992) that the "feminine" interest in the Orient did not assume institutional forms. It evolved outside formal networks of power and organizations and clubs. "That interest was channelled into one cultural form in particular—travel" (9). Like Robinson, Melman believes that female travel writers were not affected by institutionalized colonialism. Though she does not reject the imperialist discourse within their texts, Melman considers female travel writing as "a-political" compared to male Orientalist writing and terms the a-political, domestic writings interested in the everyday lives of the "other" of these women as "harem literature" (Ibid. 16). Consequently, like any other separatist approach, this work results in excluding politically active writers such as Gertrude Bell and Freya Stark. Melman points out the devaluation of Bell and Stark by being categorized as "atypical" and an "exception," but she also does not include them in her work.

In that sense, it is true that, apart from the reception, these female travel writers indeed produced texts in autobiographical forms. Nevertheless, this situation emphasizes how the discursive constraints shape writing and particularly female travel writing. Besides, since the author cannot be regarded as the main element of textual production, the biographical aspects of the texts become secondary. Worley notes that in female travel books a certain sense of anxiety can be perceived "in their compulsion to justify to the reader both the autobiographical elements of their book and the journey itself, an anxiety not shared by … male travellers" (Worley 41). The female traveller had to justify their travels and make them autobiographical to have more credibility and not be judged as mere exaggeration. For instance, in the preface of *The Valleys of the Assassins and the Other Persian Travels* (1934), Stark feels the need to justify her passion for travelling, especially to the Middle East, and to do so she gives autobiographical details. Later on, to provide a current statement regarding her interest in the

Middle East, she says: "When excessively badgered, the only explanation I could think of for being so unwantedly in Asia was an interest in Arabic grammar—a statement rarely accepted in that candid spirit in which I offered it to unconvinced enquires" (*Valleys* xxi). Apart from justifying her interest in the Middle East and the reason behind her travels, Stark also points out the fact that there is an expectation from the travellers—especially female travellers—that they have to set out for a reason. More interestingly, despite providing a reason, being interested in the language of the Other was not accepted as a proper reason. As a result, instead of solely trying to convince the reader, she makes a political statement about the arbitrary nature of questioning the motive behind travelling. Though it is true that the author is not the only agent during the production and several extra-textual discursive constraints intervene in the textual production, the importance of the cultural and social background of the author is undeniable. Porter states that:

> in spite of the frequent brilliance and explanatory power of Foucault's thought, prolonged contact with the literature of travel has convinced me of the relative coarseness of discourse theory when applied to the literary field and of its own structural limitations. This is not because I am concerned to reaffirm a faith in some kind of existentialist freedom of choice or of representation, but because the human … is never merely a passive reflector of collective speech. We leave our individual mark in our written and spoken utterances in ways of which we are frequently aware … (*Haunted Journeys* 4)

Travel writing is the representation of the Other and the Self, and also the product of the discursive constraints. Nonetheless, the voice of the author is still detectable and the influence of the biography of the author is present regardless of the gender of the author. Although Stark did justifying travelling based on the details of her personal life, she openly questioned the essence of it. Through this, she showed how her personal background surely affected her motivation to travel, which was still not good enough for some, as will be investigated in the following chapter.

As previously mentioned, female travel writers confront patriarchal society's oppression and subvert the idea of natural womanhood by both travelling and writing. For instance, by experiencing and enduring physical hardship they challenge Victorian discourses of femininity in which female physical weakness and fragility were established through medical discourses as a fact (Morin 78). According to Mills, any form of female travel writing is a revolutionary act because it shows the possibility of challenging the discourses of femininity and undermining this revolutionary act that originates from the perception of female travellers as eccentrics (*Discourses of Difference* 95). At this point, the question should be asked once

more: are they proto-feminist? A separatist approach disregarding the discursive constraints on the female travel writing ends up homogenizing female travel writing, as seen earlier. The revolutionary nature of female travel writing leads many critics and also the readers to label the productions as proto-feminist. Yet, in many of the travel-writing discourses of femininity, anti-feminist statements are present. Moreover, in their personal lives, most of the well-known female travel writers such as Mary Kingsley, Isabella Bird and Freya Stark distance themselves from the feminist movements such as "New Woman" and the Suffragettes. Besides, Gertrude Bell, who was one of the first women to have an official position in the British Empire, was the secretary of the Anti-Suffrage League. Mills analyses this situation through discourse theory by stating that, apart from the previously explained clashes between discourses of colonialism and femininity, "there is also a clash between discourses of femininity and discourses of feminism" (Ibid. 72). Hence, a proto-feminist reading causes the exclusion of some authors or the aspects of their writing pointing out the inferiority and fragility of women and racist statements.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters demonstrate the clashes of feminist and feminine discourses quite clearly. Montagu's observations of harems and the domestic life of the Orient controverted and transformed the male accounts. Instead of portraying the harem as "a cruel polygamous sexual prison," Montagu's accounts represent "Ottoman women as possessing freedoms not available to their European counterparts" (Lewis 13). For the first time, female travellers were privileged to information due to their gender and their accounts became more credible. Moreover, female travel writing subverted the idea of the totalizing and unified voice of Orientalism, not solely because of talking about the domestic sphere and showing more sympathy to the other, but also because of producing knowledge by disproving the masculine accounts. However, unlike Melman's claim of the individuality and political apathy of these writers, they cannot run away from the constraints of Orientalist discourse itself and the constraints on production. In *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (1998), Meyda Yeğenoğlu suggests that instead of challenging the Orientalist discourse, they are "supplementing" masculine Orientalist discourse instead of subverting it (80). According to Yeğenoğlu, through stressing her eye-witness position and the credibility of the accounts, Montagu contributes the Orientalist discourse with her truth-claims (Ibid.). Supporting Yeğenoğlu's argument, Lewis's statement about harem literature explains the fact that they are inseparable from the colonial discourse:

> There is no denying it—as a topic, the harem sold books. From the eighteenth century on, whether you wrote about living in one, visiting one, or escaping from

> one, any book that had anything to do with the harem sold. Publishers knew it, booksellers knew it, readers knew it and authors knew it. And women the world over who had lived within the harem's segregating systems knew it too. (29)

Western women used this opportunity to find a position for themselves within imperialism, and, via negotiating the discursive constraints, they were allowed to produce books within the needs of the imperialist agenda. By quoting Grace Ellison, who openly considers herself a feminist, Reina Lewis demonstrates the complicity of these women as well as the clashes of the discourses of feminism and imperialism: "I asked Halide-Hanoum … how we English women could help the Turkish women in their advancement. 'Ask them,' she said, 'to delete for ever that misunderstood word 'harem,' and speak of us in our Turkish 'homes'" (qtd. in Lewis 45).

First of all, this quote shows that women living in harems, besides being aware of the strategy of the harem literature, were feeling rather uncomfortable about the use of the word and recognized it as a form of othering. Moreover, it also shows the Western feminists' patronizing attitude as well as their affection and sympathy (Ibid. 45). This attitude of Western female travellers corresponds to Spivak's reading of *Jane Eyre*, which is that the Western female can attain individuality and personal empowerment through supressing the voice of the other. Accordingly, in addition to criticizing the proto-feminist reading of the texts, Yeğenoğlu's, Lowe's and Mills's approach is to consider female travel writing as an indicator of the heterogeneity of Orientalism. Yeğenoğlu notes, by referring to the citationary structure of Orientalism, that:

> it is misleading to assume that the contradictions and splits within Orientalist discourse as expressed by different authors, or sometimes even in the same text by an author, constitute a challenge to its unity and hegemony. When we come across texts that question another text's loyalty to the truth of the Orient, it is quite problematical to claim that they constitute an intervention against the symbolic universe of Orientalism. (71)

Nevertheless, analysing female travel writing as exclusively a supplement to the male Orientalist discourse ignores the resistance within it. In "The Order of Discourse," Foucault writes, "as history constantly teaches us, discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle" (52–53). Contrary to the notion of power as something oppressive and unidirectional, discourse theory, as previously mentioned, enables seeing power as operating in a more complex way. Texts hence become more than an echo of power, and are "relations of power" itself (*Discourses of Difference* 73). Consequently, because of the obligation of negotiating with the discursive

constraints, the alternative voices and interruptions within discourse should not to be overlooked; all aspects of the clashing discourses should be scrutinized.

There are also female travellers who avoided talking about the harem or gave less importance to the domestic affairs and representation of the "other" women, who Melman does not include in her work on "harem literature," as previously mentioned. For instance, in *Baghdad Sketches*, while staying in a harem in Iraq, Stark emphasizes the emptiness of the harem: "In Samarra we enjoyed it, and thought favourably of harims when one can have them to oneself" (182). By stressing the uninhibitedness of the harem, Stark aims to disassociate herself from the confining, domestic sphere of the conventional harem and harem literature. Instead, Stark would like to situate herself in the position of the masculine imperialist, yet she still needs to negotiate with the discourse of "femininity" to be intelligible in the Western world. As Bird explains: "The vulnerability of the woman traveller to social commentary means she must remain recognizable in her home society, for both commercial and personal reasons, while performing culturally unintelligible gender roles such as colonial leader or heroic adventurer abroad" (27). Therefore, the clashes of discourses of femininity and masculinity were essential for the female traveller, even during the early twentieth century, due to personal needs as well as publishing pressures. If discourse is a fundamental part of subject construction, the gender identity of these female travellers becomes as ambivalent as their discourse.

2.2 Fluid Identities: Reconstructing the Self on the Road

Travel writing is also a way of self-exploration, an inner-journey in addition to reporting the world, representing the other and the discursive constraints on the text production. As stated earlier, according to Fussell, a proper travel book is a combination of inner and outer exploration. In *The Norton Book of Travel* (1987), where Fussell focuses on male travellers, he suggests that the motivation behind travelling is a necessity of escaping, and states that, "The escape is … from the traveler's domestic identity, and among strangers a new sense of selfhood can be tried on, like a costume" (13). On the other hand, in the case of female travellers, travelling as a way of self-fashioning is quite salient. Mills rejects the examination of female travel writing as a form of escape because it might result in labelling those female travellers as an exception and disregard their desire of adventure (*Discourses of Difference* 35). However, the need of escape and self-exploration took place regardless of gender. In the previous chapter, the discursive constraints on female travel writing and its reception were examined. Due to their

position as women outside the domestic sphere and writers producing knowledge and literature, their discourses become ambivalent and construct their identity ambivalently.

Previously, I have mentioned that applying Foucauldian discourse theory to a feminist framework has been highly controversial. Judith Butler also uses discourse analysis for her theory of subject construction. As Bhabha's focus is on the hybridity of the colonial identities, Butler also refuses the notion of a unified and fixed identity. According to Butler, "Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (*Gender Trouble* 43–44). Gender identity hence is constructed through the repetition of acts, and is regulated by the relations of power. As in post-colonial studies, language is the primary tool to establish the rules of what it is to be a man and a woman. Moreover, there is no essential Self behind the constructed gendered identity. Butler states:

> if gender is constructed, it is not necessarily constructed by an "I" or a "we" who stands before that construction in any spatial or temporal sense of "before." Indeed, it is unclear that there can be an "I" or a "we" who had not been submitted, subjected to gender, where gendering is, among other things, the differentiating relations by which speaking subjects come into being … the "I" neither precedes nor follows the process of this gendering, but emerges only within the matrix of gender relations themselves. (*Bodies that Matter* 7)

As there is no essential Self behind the Western and Eastern subject, there is no Self behind masculinity and femininity. Therefore, gender is performative, and the unified Self cannot be achieved; it is a constant "doing" (*Gender Trouble* 33). Similarly, Bhabha also focuses on the process of hybridization instead of hybridity as a completed process (Huddart 4). Nevertheless, this cannot be regarded as a voluntary action, as it is highly dependent on the process of sedimentation:

> The act that one does, the act that one performs, is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene. Hence, gender is an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again. (*Performative Acts and Gender Constitutions* 272)

The construction of gender identity occurs in relation to other subjects and spaces, or in other words "is a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint" (*Undoing Gender* 1). Hence, female travel writing, rather than being an organized feminist act challenging the norms of femininity, contains particular examples regarding the improvisation of the identities.

When female travellers left their domestic sphere and travelled, to some extent they escaped from the gender constraints, although the discursive constraints pursued them during their travels; their mobility did not bring freedom, but it allowed them to blur the boundaries of gender. Bird writes that, "systematic displacement helps to create a politics of temporary location based on transient contact zones" (34). In other words, female travellers get the opportunity to perform different roles outside of their own culture's gender roles defined for them. Bird uses Pratt's term "contact zone," which is the place "where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power" ("Arts of the contact zone" 34), to emphasize the fluidity of the Self. If our identity is socially constructed and we reiterate our gender performance, which is established before us in our culture, what happens if we find ourselves in a culture with a different set of regulations in various contact zones? How does the Western male react to the ambivalence of this situation? Herein, I would like to go back to Bhabha's ambivalence to talk about the colonizers' ambivalence alongside the colonized. As previously explained, trying to construct the image of the colonized as both similar and different results in the anxious repetition of the stereotypes about the Other. Besides, recognizing the similarities between the Self and the Other disturbs the so-called unified identity of the colonizer since their subject construction depends on the Other and creates anxiety once more. This interdependent subject creation is termed "hybridity" by Bhabha. According to Bhabha, hybridization of the identities takes place in the contact zone, which he terms the "Third Space." According to Bhabha:

> The intervention of the Third Space of enunciation, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed … Such an intervention … challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People. (51)

In this third space, during the cross-cultural exchange, the female traveller identity becomes even more hybrid. Apart from the position of being a colonizer, the female has to adopt the role of the masculine explorer/exploiter. Therefore, both Butler's notion of performativity and Bhabha's hybridity can be observed in female travel writing.

Bird quotes Bénédicte Monicat to portray the complex process of the identity construction of the female traveller in the contact zones and also the issue of representation for them:

> Nothing is so complex as the intrusion of the other gender—of sexual difference—into the literary genre which goes forth to discover the Other. It is

> the Other who regards the Other. It is also the Other who sees itself in the Other, who identifies with the Other. Furthermore, it is the Other who rejects its own image, it is the broken mirror, it is the oppressed person who oppresses in return. (184)

Due to the resemblance of the Other within the Self, not only in terms of cultural identity but also the othering process, female traveller's anxiety results in the anxious repetition of the masculine identity. By doing so, this time, firstly, they have the opportunity to perform outside of their gender, and the third space enables them to challenge the sense of "historical identity." Secondly, this subversion of performativity disturbs, once again, the allegedly stable and unified identity of the masculine Self who stabilizes his identity through the image of the feminine Other. Therefore, like the colonizer's anxious repetition of the stereotypes regarding the Other, the male colonizer established the stereotype of the independent female travellers as eccentrics and spinsters, restricting female mobility to secure the unified Self.

In the Middle East, where there were no established roles available for women, such as being a memsahib, female mobility was even more problematic for the colonial authorities. As Penelope Tuson points out, "The British authorities in the Gulf, already confronted by economic rivals in the region, now also realized that their ordered male world was facing an influx of potentially disruptive women" (211). The confrontation led to certain regulations limiting the mobility of the female and forcing them to be chaperoned, which is disliked by many independent travellers. To be able to continue travelling, they had to find a way to escape the objections. While some of the female travellers objected to and confronted these obstacles, some of them, such as Gertrude Bell and Freya Stark, chose to be conformists and became active agents of the British Empire (Ibid. 183). Therefore, they adopted the role of the masculine imperialist, which ended up clashing with their performance of femininity instead of erasing it. On the other hand, there were women such as Rosita Forbes (1890–1967) who chose not to be conformists. This attitude resulted in conflicts with the male authorities. A General responded to Forbes by saying: "You get back to England and enjoy yourself … buy yourself some more of those big hats I've seen you wearing" (qtd. in Tuson 192). Butler states that: "Performativity is neither free play nor theatrical self-presentation; nor can it be simply equated with performance" (*Bodies that Matter* 95). As can be seen from these examples, gender performativity is not a free decision as the performance is constructed through power relations. Therefore, how should the agency of the subject be approached? How do the female travellers refashion themselves?

Although both Bhabha and Butler were criticized due to their poststructuralist approach towards subject construction and rejection of the pre-discursive self, they include the agency of the subject in their works. Through their notion of agency, the agency of the female traveller and their interruption of the patriarchal society and colonial discourse (Orientalism) can be comprehended. In *Gender Trouble* (1990), it is explained that the agency can be achieved through parody:

> The notion of an original or primary gender identity is often parodied within the cultural practices of drag, cross-dressing, and the sexual stylization of butch/femme identities … it gives us a clue to the way in which the relationship between primary identification—that is, the original meanings accorded to gender—and subsequent gender experience might be reframed. (174–175)

If gender is established through regulated, repetitive acts, it is possible to repeat it in a different way by negotiating the constraints. Through the disruptive performances, the arbitrariness and the constructedness of gender identities can be remarked upon, but this does not mean that the subversion takes place easily. Butler notes that, "there is only a taking up of the tools where they lie, where the very 'taking up' is enabled by the tool lying there" (Ibid. 185). The subversion occurs within the discourse where the identity is constructed, and hence these issues of reception and intelligibility are still present. For instance, as Bird notes, "If she [the female traveller] chooses to remain outside the norms of femininity she is excluded from society with no means of redress or right to speech: the unnatural woman becomes what Butler terms a 'human spectre'" (43). Therefore, discourses of femininity in their writing and some of the female traveller's distance from the feminist movements—or even anti-feminist statements—can be understood through the limitation of their agency.

Like Butler, Bhabha also situates the agency within the discourse through the previously explained concept of "mimicry," which is simultaneously making the colonizer recognizable and closer to the Self but also constructing it as the Other at the same time. The ambivalent "mimic men"[6] identity both fixes and justifies the identity of the colonizer but also disrupts its unity; likewise, it creates the in-between space where the resistance can take place. Mimicry, once again like Butler's parody, does not originate from the essential Self (Bhabha 88). The ambivalent identity of the "mimic men" also reveals the fragmented Self of the colonizer; as gender identity is not a volunteer performance, the identity of the colonizer and colonized are also interdependent. As a result, it can be suggested that "colonial discourse's ambivalence has

[6] See subchapter 2.2.

the strange effect of making the British feel not quite British, and alienated from what they must believe is their true identity," realized through the fear of "going native" (Huddart 44).

"Going native" is an expression for the Westerners who adopted some of the Oriental costumes and customs and highly anatomized by the Western discourse, which demonstrates the hybridization process. Bird considers the "going native" narrative as one of the aspects of female travel writing: "When dressing to construct an Other identity abroad, the choice of costume is not arbitrary, nor are the consequences, particularly for women, taken lightly" (72). After this statement, she explains that the cross-cultural or even cross-dressing itself was a necessity for the safety and mobility of the female travellers, and also an attempt "to construct a new identity in the Orient" (Ibid. 72). Through this cross-cultural and gender performance they can get away from legal restrictions—the obligation of being chaperoned—and also mix with the local communities. Hence, this act of cross-dressing or "going native" unsettles both the unified image of the feminine and the Western subject; it reveals the performative nature of the gender identity and hybridization of the subject within the in-between space.

In the case of Freya Stark, cross-dressing was not her initial choice; the way she performed "going native" was learning the language and living with them, which distressed the colonial authorities in Iraq. Stark was severely criticized by the British social circle who were secluded from the local society. On the other hand, Stark was stating that she was living in the Muslim quarter due to financial reasons (*Baghdad Sketches* 37). After being recognized by the Royal Geographical Society and financially supported by them, she started living a different life at home and the Middle East. Stark's biographer Jane Fletcher Genisse writes:

> Although she was still considered unconventional, most now forgave her. The high commissioner's wife came over at a party and pressed her hand. "I'm so glad we are rescuing you from going native," she said, beamingly conferring absolution on the community's prodigal who so dangerously consorted with "wogs." (131)

The reaction of the high commissioner's wife summarizes the anxiety of the Western subject due to the disruption of the unified image of the colonizer. It also emphasizes the constraints the female traveller goes through. Apart from being a woman, Stark was not financially comfortable and stable, unlike the middle-class women in the Middle East. Stark was highly dependent on the money she received from the Royal Geographical Society and book sales. Therefore, at a certain point, complicity was inevitable for her. Lastly, the issue of national identity was extraordinarily problematic for her. Stark was an English woman who was born in Paris and grew up in Italy. Her accent was highly marked with her life, indicating the hybridity

of her background. Being in the contact zone with an already hybrid background results in anxiety more than the situation of the British from Britain. Stark feels the need to prove her Britishness and femininity at every opportunity to remain intelligible and be accepted, in ways that I will detail in the following chapter. In other words, instead of pointing out the complicity or the resistance of Stark's discourse, the agency of Stark is examined as a part of the discourse as in the works of Butler and Bhabha.

3. Freya Stark

Freya Stark was born in Paris on January 31, 1893, the child of Flora and Robert Stark, who were both artists. Stark had an unconventional upbringing; Flora grew up in Italy in a family with financial problems and Robert was from a "well-to-do" family in Britain (Geniesse 14). This family, with a diverse economic and cultural background, lived in different cities before and after Freya's birth. Stark's family lived in Asolo, Italy during the first years of Freya's childhood. As Stark's biographer Geniesse notes, although the Starks enjoyed their time in Asolo, they also moved out and "[t]heir nomadic pattern never changed" (Ibid. 21). Nonetheless, Stark chose Asolo as her permanent home between her travels, which she always came back to have some sense of stability in her life.

Stark had always been strongly connected to her mother, but their relationship was also quite overwhelming for her due her mother's strong character (Ibid. 23). On the other hand, Stark's relationship with her father was very different and "more relaxing," since the father was a shy person (Ibid.). In addition to their unconventional nomadic lifestyle and multicultural environment, Robert Stark's way of raising his daughter was highly unconventional. Geniesse writes:

> Freya's gift for capturing in her prose a sense of nature and landscape obviously derived from this early training. From her father, who in some ways treated her like a son, she acquired a traditionally masculine sense of land contours and geology as well as an alert eye for different kinds of vegetation … Robert also encouraged his daughters not to cry when they were hurt, unlike Italian children, who, Freya ruefully noted, would be scooped up immediately and petted. Robert wanted his girls to be brave … (Ibid. 23–24)

Instead of being influenced by the idea of how to be a little girl according to the society, Robert Stark wanted to raise her daughters differently. However, as Butler stated, subject construction is not a volunteer act, and Robert's act was not free from the rest of the society. First of all, these children cannot be excluded from the interactions with the rest of the public which expected them to be vulnerable, fragile and uninterested in nature. Moreover, their mother Flora had a Victorian mind-set while raising her children; she wanted them to get married, have children and act in a feminine way. Secondly, the issue of cultural difference becomes significant as well. To explain Bhabha's notion of culture, Huddart states:

> Culture has a dual identity, rather like colonial discourse. On the one hand, it is homely or realist, asserting its coherence and stability: it is made meaningful by those to whom it belongs. On the other hand, it is unhomely because it is always

> changing: it is always being made meaningful by others, those to whom it apparently does not belong. (56)

Asolo indeed gave Freya Stark a sense of stability in her life, but she was a foreigner there as well. As a British man who grew up in Devon, Robert Stark's way of raising children was different from that of the Italian parents. No matter how he raised his daughters, their cultural identity was affected by the Italian society they lived in. Therefore, the Stark sisters was neither Italian—due to their father's influence—nor British. Further, Robert Stark's influence also contributed to Stark's unconventional career choice for a "female"; in her future life, Stark also had to deal with her ambivalent gender position in the colonial context as neither feminine nor masculine.

Lastly, after the couple separated, Flora took the children to Dronero, a town in northern Italy, where she worked in a factory and they struggled financially. Their lives changed drastically; Flora was working in a factory all day while Freya and Vera had to take care of the house chores. They lost the privileges of a middle-class family they once had and could not even afford to pay for fuel for the heating (Geniesse 28). Therefore, apart from the race and gender, her class-identity was highly ambivalent. Earlier, I mentioned that Flora had a Victorian mindset about raising her daughters in a conventionally feminine way. Nonetheless, unlike most of the women of her generation, she was a single mother (who chose to separate from the father) working in a factory (Ibid. 25). The ambivalent gender performance of her mother allowed her to go beyond and resist certain notions of female performance, but her Victorian notions became a part of her identity, which can be seen in her writing and personality in her later life. Stark was single for a long time, and chose to have an unconventional path as a woman, yet she always wanted to be married. Stark says, "Anyway it is a comfort to know that all the greatest thinkers are with us; I think there is not one who considers marriage as a necessity to the fullness of life—though personally I would like to be married" (qtd. in Geniesse 132). Stark's complicated stance towards marriage reminds us of Butler's statement about the difficulty of subverting the gender performance; she wants to be a "great thinker," which is commonly associated with men, and questions the necessity of marriage, but the feminine discourse interferes and she notes that she would like to be married as it is expected for a woman.

While experiencing this hardship, Herbert Young, a family friend, came into their life. Realizing how difficult and lonely their lives were, "he sat with them for hours" reading books, and "[s]tarved of proper schooling, Freya fell eagerly on the occasional books sent by friends: the stories of Kipling, Edward FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, poetry by Keats, Wordsworth …" (Ibid. 28). Strikingly, all the books that are mentioned by Geniesse are

Orientalist texts or romantic poems set in the ancient ruins in the East. These texts aroused great interest in Stark who, not surprisingly, later became a colonialist. This situation is a clear example of what Said meant by the intertextuality of the Orientalist works; through the influence of the Orientalist works she grew up reading, Stark inevitably produced Orientalist texts throughout her career.

When Stark was thirteen she had a terrible accident in the factory where her mother worked. Because of being curious about how the new machine in the factory worked, Stark came too close to it and her hair and half of her scalp were cut off. Since that day, Stark started to feel insecure about her femininity and physical appearance and always covered her disfigured scalp with flamboyant hats. A couple of years after this accident, Stark went to London and stayed with Viva Jeyes, who was a friend of her parents and the honorary secretary of the Women's Anti-Suffrage League (Ibid. 36). Jeyes took her to tea parties where Stark met important writers such as H. G. Wells, W. B. Yeats and Mrs. Humphry Ward, who was an opponent of the Suffragists. Stark was impressed by the exciting world Veyes presented to her and became highly influenced by this environment, pointing out her distance from the feminist movements later in her life, even if she never regarded herself anti-feminist like Gertrude Bell did. Further, despite approving of the ideas of Ward regarding how a woman should behave and "must never speak of Propaganda" (Ibid.), in 1939 she was appointed to the Middle East Propaganda Section of the Ministry of Information (Pierpont). Thus, later in her career, the constraints of discourses of femininity she had established herself throughout her life contradicted with the discourses of masculinity due to her ambivalent position as a travel writer. In 1908, Stark started her university education in English Literature at London University. During her studies, he mother persisted with the idea that she should look for "eligible bachelors" in London (Geniesse 43). Stark's education was interrupted by the First World War and she decided to become a nurse in Bologna where she met Guido Ruato, to whom she got engaged (Hawley 327). Soon after, Ruato decided to break up with her because of her previous lover, which caused a great deal of insecurities apart from the heartbreak.

Stark always wanted to write but financial problems and the obligation to work prevented it (Geniesse 51). Woolf notes, "Give her a room of her own and five hundred a year, let her speak her mind and leave out half that she now puts in, and she will write a better book one of these days" (94). This quotation from "A Room of One's Own" highlights the problematics of the reception of female writing as inferior, and states that if women had their own financial freedom and privacy they would be able to produce texts in a better way. Woolf's statement only addresses the educated, intellectual, upper-class women from her own

background and neglects the class factor. Stark had to earn a living and was not able to have sufficient time, money or privacy to use her creativity. As can be seen from this example, the problem of the First World Feminism that Spivak pointed out affected not only race but also class.

The death of Stark's mentor and professor from the University of London Professor Kerr changed the rest of her life, and she decided to take his advice to "test herself against the discipline of a non-European language" (Geniesse 53). The rising importance of the Middle East due to the political "talk of mandates" of the diplomats and the economic determinant of oil contributed to her choice of Arabic, which her mother failed to comprehend (Ibid. 53-54). As Melman notes, "Arabia emerged late as a destination of exploration, but quickly became both an object of political and economic interest and an iconic place" (*The Middle East / Arabia* 108). Freya was aware of the significance of the Middle East for the British Empire, and after the death of her younger sister Vera she decided to set off to the Arabian Peninsula. Nonetheless, as stated in the previous chapter, being a woman in the Middle East was harder than the more established colonies, such as India.

As an unmarried woman in her late thirties with very little money, following the advice of the Brummana missionaries she stayed with an Arab Christian family (Geniesse 60). The female travel writing in the area before the eighteenth century was solely religious, thus being a missionary was the most common life for a single woman in the Middle East (*Women's Orients* 10). However, this religious position available for her own expected gender performance was not suitable for Stark. The moment she arrived she found herself attending Bible classes and YWCA, but her motivation for travel was to learn Arabic and meet Arabs, and therefore she politely refused the invitations of the missionaries (Geniesse 7). Certainly, Stark's refusal to follow the expectations of the society resulted in the rumours of her being a spy, since no one could understand her interest in being with the locals or learning Arabic. Once again, the discursive constraints on the individual can be seen from the early experiences of Stark as a single woman in the Middle East. Therefore, how did she manage to negotiate these discursive constraints?

To examine the discursive factors influencing the construction of the identity of Stark, Butler's and Bhabha's ideas are highly useful. Her complicated background enables us to demonstrate the artificiality of the Self both in terms of gender and race. As a child who moved several times and had parents from different cultural backgrounds, her national identity was problematic. Although she spent only a very short time in England visiting family friends and for her education, she self-identified as a British lady (Geniesse 134). Nevertheless, it was not

enough for the Britons to recognize her as such, especially because of her strong Italian accent. Also, in Italy, as previously explained, due to her upbringing, she was different from the rest of the Italian girls. Her hybrid identity caused anxiety by unfixing notions of a unified national identity. Nevertheless, her hybridity did not enable her to realize the heterogeneity of her cultural background. Instead, Stark "determinedly adopted as many British mannerism she could—as a counter to be seen as … 'a funny foreign little thing'" (Geniesse 134). In a letter she wrote to her mother she mentioned, "I really have done nothing … beyond wishing to talk as much Arabic as I can, and regretting that we [the British] can't be less superior and more polite," and justified herself by stating that she was "as much an imperialist as anybody" (qtd. in Geniesse 101). Her ambivalent national identity did not allow her to have a legitimate status in the Middle East. To be able to get what she wanted, Stark had to negotiate the discourses of imperialism, and considering the fact that "imperialism was seen as an integral part of British identity" (Bird 5–6), Stark had to be as British as she could.

On the other hand, the woman she was compared to the most was Bell, a true British aristocrat lady. It is true that Gertrude Bell also faced many constraints and hardships as a woman, but Stark had to struggle due to her class and national background as well. For instance, Bell had an Oxford degree, but Stark was a self-taught woman. During her first years in the Middle East, Stark travelled in Syria to research Druses[7] by using material written by Bell because there was no other text written about the area, apart from Thomas Cook's "much-maligned" guidebook (Geniesse 81). This situation demonstrates the groundlessness to reduce female travel writing to domestic writing and allows us to question female travellers' so-called inability to produce Orientalist knowledge. As previously mentioned, like Stark, Bell also adopted the male role within colonialist discourse. Nevertheless, it was not enough for Stark to empathize and give credit to Bell. In a letter she wrote to a friend, Stark declares:

> I am re-reading Gertrude Bell's Syria and comparing her route with ours … She, however, travelled with three baggage mules, two tents, and three servants: so I consider we were the more adventurous. She also says that the water in the J. Druse is "undrinkable by European standards," so I suppose our standard cannot be European: or perhaps an Italian education has hardened us? (qtd. in Geneisse 82)

Stark's Italian background, which she always tried to conceal, was revealed each time she criticized the arrogant attitude of the British people. Compared to the other upper or middle-class female travellers, Stark had a more empathetic stance towards the local people and the life

[7] Druses are Arabic-speaking members of a religious group living in the Middle East.

in the East because of being Othered by the same people due to her class and ambivalent national identity. Regardless of their differences, their position as a single woman and independent traveller in the East resulted in taking over the masculine role and interrupting the fixed gender roles of the masculine and the feminine.

To be able to live and travel in the East, Stark had to secure a livelihood since there was no husband or wealthy parents to financially support her. Through the connection of the staunch imperialist Captain Holt, Stark started working for a newspaper called *Baghdad Times*, which led to the publication of *Baghdad Sketches*. On her first day, Stark reacted against her co-workers and stated that they must stand up when she entered the room. Geniesse suggests that Stark had "a tendency to act imperiously when she felt her social status was questioned" (Ibid. 133). The constant refashioning of identity distressed her, and she tried to assert her femininity but at the same time subvert the gender roles.

3.1 *Baghdad Sketches*

Baghdad Sketches is a collection of Stark's articles she wrote for the British audience while living in Baghdad and originally published in the *Baghdad Times* newspaper. As stated earlier, balancing writing and the assertion of truth was highly problematic for women since it obscured the gender roles; therefore, this situation resulted in the negative reception of female writing and they had to negotiate these discursive constraints. The title of this book is an explicit example of this; the word "sketches" abides by the rules of the discourses of femininity in travel writing which Sara Suleri names the "feminine picturesque," meaning that the women were only allowed to assert their ideas through remaining "on the peripheries of colonization, collecting from that vantage pint peripheral images of people and places" (75). In a review of *Baghdad Sketches* published in 1938, it is stated that "[t]o amuse her friends Miss Stark wrote for the *Baghdad Times* a series of sketches describing her every-day life" (Edmonds 274). Certainly, this comment is related to how she presented the book in the preface. As previously explained, due to the constraints on the reception of their works, female travellers had a constant need to justify themselves and their motivations to write. Similar to the "private letters made public" attitude of Lady Mary Wortley Montague in the eighteenth century, Stark states that these articles "were not intended for a book; like straws thrown casually into some propitious earthly strata, they have become fossilized by accident, not by any innate permanence of their own" (*Baghdad Sketches* ix). As Thompson emphasizes, this sort of publishing disclaimer is very common in female travel writing (180). Moreover, the content and the narrative style—

depicting the daily life of the colonized through what Pratt terms an "ethnographic manners-and-customs" narrative— are also suitable for the discourses of femininity (*Imperial Eyes* 64). Nevertheless, this does not prevent her from portraying the social, financial and political climate of the Middle East and harshly criticizing the British community in Iraq. Stark carefully negotiates the discursive constraints as the clashes of discourses can be seen throughout the text. Thus, Stark's work cannot only be regarded as a part of the so-called homogenous woman's travel writing, treating trivial manners in a way only suitable for the discourses of femininity, although she could not run away from the publishing strategies portraying her work as such.

Like most of the travel writers during the heyday of the empire (1880–1940), Stark is without doubt a staunch imperialist (Carr 71). Yet, when the complexity and heterogeneity of these texts are taken into account, "the anxieties" and "uncertainties of the nature of the colonial discourse can be revealed" (Ibid. 73). Especially during the age of modernism, due to the increasing globalization, colonial discourse became much more complex. As previously mentioned, in accordance with globalization and the development of transportation, salvage travel writing was one of the most significant conventions of the travel writing of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In the preface, Stark also highlights the changing identity and hybridization of the Orient:

> Whether these Western floods, to which all her sluices are open, come to the East for baptism or drowning, is hard to say. Total immersion in any case she is bound to submit to and we—who love the creature—wait with some misgiving to see in what condition her regenerated head will reappear above the waters; we stand upon the shore and collect such oddments as we find floating in chaos—her customs, religions, her clothes and trinkets and some, alas! of her virtues. We snatch them as they drift for ever out of sight, and encase them in an armour of words—and by so doing, not unhopeful of the future, yet wage our little losing battle against the fragilities of Time. (*Baghdad Sketches* ix)

In this quotation, like many other examples of salvage travel writing, there is an intense need to record what is vanishing from the Earth—the authentic experience of the Orient. Stark's first depiction of Baghdad also shows her discontent with the city's image: "What you first see of the Caliph's city is a most sordid aspect; … a dingy hybrid between the East and the West, with the unattractiveness of both" (Ibid. 12). The unappealing depiction of an Eastern city is expected from Orientalist travel writing. Stark further states, "[t]he glory has departed, but the life is unchanged" (Ibid.), reiterating the typical Orientalist depiction of the East as frozen in time, which is explained by Said, as cited in the second chapter. However, this emphasis on the hybridity and the people she deemed responsible for the unattractiveness of the city makes her

position ambivalent. According to Stark, it was the indifferent British architects who did not study and pay attention to Arabic architecture. She explains:

> it needs only the seeing eye and a little study of the tradition of Arab architecture … to combine these elements into a harmony that will not only fit with its background, but will also produce a house infinitely more comfortable to live in than what is evolved out of the inner consciousness of someone who has never been within some thousand miles of the Persian Gulf and its climate. (Ibid.)

Unlike Bhabha's concept of the anxiety of the colonizer, Stark is not anxious solely because of the hybridization of the Orient; she is also anxious due to the lack of knowledge and detachment of the British in the East. Her ambiguous national identity, already being "a funny little foreign thing" for the British, allows her to have a different attitude from the British community in Iraq. Stark does not take offence at living with the locals and learning their language, religion and culture. In fact, she thinks that this attitude is more beneficial for the empire. Hence, for Stark, the future is hybrid and British people should learn and understand the Eastern culture.

The first article in the book also emphasizes and criticizes the aloofness of British people in Middle East and the Westernization of the East simultaneously. Stark begins her book by saying:

> In a very short time a railway will link Baghdad with Europe.
> Even now the crossing of the desert is an everyday affair, and although the Nairn Motor Transport do what they can, and cook your breakfast-sausage romantically for you in the open desert over a fire of camelthron, with an old paraffin box ready to help in case of need, they do not quite succeed, one must admit, in giving the true nomadic feeling to nay except most innocent travellers. (Ibid.)

Melman notes that, starting from the nineteenth century, the Middle East, despite its status as the periphery of the British Empire, became a utopic place of the authentic Arab experience where the Western people corrupted by civilization could seek asylum (*The Middle East/Arabia* 112). Nonetheless, at the very beginning of her book, Stark mocks the heroic narrative and reveals the inaccuracy of the exotic portrayal of the East in Orientalist writings. Contrary to the other British people, Stark uses cheaper means of transportation and travels with the locals; the reason for this is more about her "being poor" than experiencing the true nomadic feeling as a true traveller, even though she is not against that idea either (*Baghdad Sketches* 3). Stark also has, like many travellers since the nineteenth century, an anti-touristic rhetoric[8] and theme of self-exploration:

[8] See chapter 2, pg. 10.

> To awaken quite alone in a strange town is one of the pleasantest sensations in the world … all except the rarest of your friends, even most of your luggage — everything, in fact, which belongs to your everyday life, is merely hindrance. The tourist travels in his own atmosphere like a snail in his shell, stands, as it were, on his own perambulating doorstep to look at the continents of the world. But if you discard all this, and sally forth with a leisurely and a blank mind, there is no knowing what may not happen to you. (Ibid. 11)

Stark here also judges upper-class travellers like Bell, travelling with multiple suitcases and tents. Moreover, her narrative fits with Fussell's argument when he claims that the inner-journey and anti-touristic stance should be present in the travel writing which establishes its literary value. Yet, as pointed out through the quotation of Fussell criticizing Stark,[9] her narrative characteristics were not treated by Fussell, and instead her extra-textual characteristics (biographical aspects) became the unique elements for criticism.

To spend the night, they stop at Rutba, "planted in the wilderness when Aladdin's uncle rubbed the lamp," because otherwise there would be no other explanation for this place, "200 empty miles from anywhere" (Ibid. 4). With a typical reference to Aladdin, Freya Stark establishes an Orientalist representation of an isolated and untouched land. Immediately, she also writes:

> You walk into a room and dine on salmon mayonnaise and other refinements and read notices on walls like those of an English club house in the country … I have not felt so near home since the day when … we discovered marmalade in Jericho. (Ibid.)

Stark demonstrates how the British have penetrated the uninhabited land and excessively cling on to their British identity even in the middle of the desert. This time, Stark joins the British people during her stay in Rutba by using her racial privilege, despite being poor compared to them. Meanwhile her fellow local travellers eat and sleep in the car. She remarks:

> I think it is not really good manners to be more comfortable than my fellow-travellers; it is a sentiment which never gets put into practice, but I had felt apologetic about it when I went to dine. They would have been far from happy in that aloof British atmosphere: they like a sympathetic world where people talk to anyone at all times without being introduced. (Ibid.)

Apart from harshly criticizing British aloofness, she acknowledges her complicity through indicating that she indeed chose to have dinner and stay with the British in spite of being apologetic. Yet, Stark is aware of not belonging to either world completely; she is neither rich

[9] See subchapter 3.1, pg. 28.

enough to travel with the British, nor poor enough to dine with the natives. Her ambivalent position as a female traveller without any financial support and being partially excluded from them enable Stark to observe and illustrate the negative aspects of the British community in the Middle East in a different way to other colonialist texts. Besides, she experiences imperialist propaganda when she encounters an anti-British native as well:

> He [Nasir] was anti-British because it was the obvious thing to be; all his friends were so; the editors told him to be so; he was none of your independent thinkers … I assured him of the blatant untruthfulness of his favourite papers. (Ibid. 29)

Stark belittles the resistance of the Iraqi nationalist movement and considers it a "fashionable thing to do" (Ibid. 27), and tries to convince Nasir regarding the benevolence of the empire, while underestimating his ideas and freewill. She further claims that, "when the British took over the country, Nasir became a schoolmaster … and adopted European clothes. He did not think much of them" (Ibid. 30). Stark's words are specific examples of the "civilizing mission" discourse of imperialism. They also exemplify Bhabha's "mimic man," the person who has become "white but not quite" through the imperialist civilizing mission. This anxiety towards hybridization can be observed in the institutions and is encouraged by the political authorities as Stark mentions: "The Political Officer … said that it was better to be either all European or all Asiatic in the matter of clothes" (Ibid. 30) The significance of clothes to construct of the Self indicates the hybrid identity. According to Bhabha, as in the example of Nasir, the resistance and the agency of the colonized subject are within its ambivalence, which Stark fails to comprehend. Instead, her reception of Nasir's identity performance concerns his complicity.

Even if *Baghdad Sketches* is filled with sympathetic depictions of the Iraqi people and her life among them, Stark, in a way, establishes herself as a true British lady when her "status is questioned" once more. When she arrives Baghdad, she realizes the impossibility of living there on "less than a pound a day," and feels desperate since she does not have enough money to travel (Ibid. 7). The financial struggle brings about the need to earn her own money, making the publishing constraints on her writing more predictable. Besides, this situation ends up with her decision to reside in a Muslim neighbourhood:

> I spent a morning in what is known as the thieves' bazaar, bought what little furniture was small enough for the house, saw it loaded on the back of a Kurdish porter, and walked with him sedately to the door of my new home, where the neighbours gathered together to promise me sympathy and assistance while I lived among them. (Ibid. 15)

Her friendly portrayal of the neighbourhood shows that she does not feel alienated as she did among the British in Rutba. While the British community marginalize Stark, she feels

welcomed in her new neighbourhood, and explains this in her newspaper article written for the British audience, unsettling them even more. Stark notes the thoughtfulness and kindness of the blacksmith of her neighbourhood as he only works when she is not at home. Further, the women from the neighbourhood who came for tea admired Stark's house, which is, as she states, "far more than most of my English friends were able to do" (Ibid. 24).

Nevertheless, Stark is still different from the rest of the neighbourhood, as she observes, "If one lives in a slum in Baghdad, the servant problem is just as acute as anywhere else, though of rather a different nature" (Ibid. 16). Although Stark dislikes Iraq becoming a mini-Raj,[10] she has a servant in a slum of Baghdad and complains about "the servant problem" like a memsahib. Living alone in a Muslim neighbourhood, Stark takes over the masculine role, but, at the same time, complies with the role of the women in the colonies by also discussing the domestic issues, such as servants. Moreover, the smell of the neighbourhood annoys her considerably: "True happiness, we consider, is incompatible with an inefficient drainage system. It is one of those points on which we differ most fundamentally from the East, where happiness and sanitation are not held to have any particular connection" (Ibid. 16). Noting that the problems of drainage are a consequence of the geographical conditions of the city does not prevent her from making assumptions regarding the sanitary habits of a whole nation. Stark ends up establishing the binary oppositions of inferior East and superior West by reproducing the Orientalist stereotype of "dirty" Arabs. On the other hand, she also subverts those stereotypes. Starks writes about a scary moment she experienced when she was "seized in both arms by an Arab," who was actually saving her from falling into a river (Ibid. 42). According to Thompson, "a common yardstick for demonstrating and asserting masculinity in travel has been the degree of danger and discomfort involved in the journey" (176). Hence, trying to illustrate the Orient as a secure place, apart from subverting the stereotypes, functions as an interference of the feminine discourses to balance Stark's masculine Orientalist discourse indicating the constraints on the textual production. Stark thus legitimizes her presence in the East by rejecting the Orientalist stereotype of the "dangerous" Arab.

As a consequence of the smell of her "slum," Stark goes to the Municipality to ask if there is any solution for it. She reveals where she lives to a British officer, who directly visits her house and orders her to leave the neighbourhood as soon as she can (*Baghdad Sketches* 37). Accordingly, she notes:

[10] The Indian Raj was the British domination in the Indian subcontinent between 1858–1947. The British colonial presence in the Middle East is relatively shorter and less structured. The term "mini-Raj" is used to emphasize the peripheral status of the Middle East.

> Mr. B. was very sympathetic. The British Civil Service thinks that ladies who travel in the East for fun are eccentric: it discourages as many as it can and bears the rest with patience. I, however, was being not eccentric but merely economical. Mr. B. gazed at my house with the sad look which comes to sanitary inspectors in Baghdad whom nothing can surprise any longer. "I'll find you something better than this" said he. And so he did. (Ibid.)

Stark is highly self-conscious about her reception as a female traveller and draws upon very similar matters as feminist writers, as developed in the second chapter. However, at the same time, Stark needs to be intelligible and emphasize that it was the result of an economic obligation, not a preference. Stark's unsettling act of "going native" and gender performance is interrupted by the masculine British figure, recalling Butler's emphasis on the performativity dependent on the relations of power, as previously explained. Bird explains that, "[r]ecognition is a single-change effect with vital consequences for social identity: we are either recognized or not, part of the social group or Other, if not Us, then Them" (179). Hence, with the anxiety of her ambiguous identity, Stark accepts the order of the British officer and moves out from the neighbourhood, even if she "had no thought of leaving it" (*Baghdad Sketches* 36). Thus, it can be observed that identity performance, as stated earlier, is not independent from the discourse but within it. Stark is not allowed to "go native" or make her own decisions as a woman. Yet, by rejecting the label of "eccentric" and pointing out the normality of being a woman in a slum of Baghdad in her text, she reclaims her voice and shows resistance.

Unfortunately, the interference of the British patriarchy was not limited to her moving out of the neighbourhood. After being invited by her Iraqi friend to visit his Bedouin cousin in the desert, Stark encounters the constraints she has to face as a female traveller in the East: "I said I should be delighted, and being still new to Baghdad and unaware of its peculiar attitude towards the female tourist, began to ask which of my English friends would like to join me" (Ibid. 47). It is clear that Stark would also like to be included in the British community, but her Otherness becomes apparent when she wants to trespass the gender norms. Bird states that the use of words such as "new" and "unaware" posits her as an outsider, demonstrating that "she cannot speak the language of the British community in Iraq and is only nominally accepted by it" (58). In addition to her naivety and ignorance regarding how to behave as a woman in the Orient, the word "peculiar" makes her criticism clear. Stark continues:

> A document was handed to me, printed for the guidance of ladies in Iraq and advising them, if they must wander, at least not to do so by themselves. "Ladies," it proceeded to say in language elegant but cautious, "are *deemed* to be accompanied then travelling with a European or American of the male sex." (*Baghdad Sketches* 47)

The full document, entitled "European and American Ladies in Iraq: Regulations Regarding Residence and Travelling," is presented to the audience in a separate chapter with the same name. Through this regulation, patriarchal discourse's aim to control the material body and the movement of the female travellers becomes apparent. Stark, by publishing the full document, openly makes a statement about the unfairness of this situation. The anxiety of the male colonialist occurs due not only to the ambivalence of the colonial Other. The masculine colonialist, unsettled by the allegedly unusual gender performance of the female colonialist, whose only option was to adopt a masculine role to be part of the colonial discourse since there was no available position for women, as explained by Pratt, had to preserve his own identity and authority through law. Moreover, Bird asserts that this regulation illustrates Butler's concept of the subject construction and the impact of the state during the process. Stark's use of italics forces the reader "to ask who exactly is doing the 'deeming' and who, in essence, is allowed to count as a 'lady'," meaning that one can only be "a good British lady" through obeying the legalisation (58). Besides, Bird recalls that, two decades ago, Gertrude Bell achieved relative freedom to travel unaccompanied in the desert, showing that being an accomplice of imperialism was a way to evade these regulations (Ibid.). Hence, this example points out why Foucauldian discourse analysis is useful for examining the female travel writing through exposing that power does not operate unidirectionally.

Nevertheless, Stark's attitude towards the obligation of being chaperoned is an example of how travel writing is also, as Mills claims, a revolutionary act: "This seemed to me an indelicate suggestion on the part of the British Civil Service with which it was unnecessary and hardly respectable to comply" (*Baghdad Sketches* 48). As Bird explains, "[i]f, as Butler suggests, gender is 'a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint,' then the increased restrictions placed on the women travellers … can only result in increasingly inconvenient and disruptive improvisations" (59). The most "crushing" part of the document, according to Stark, is the threatening: "if you get into trouble by doing this sort of thing, no other woman will ever be allowed to do it afterwards" (*Baghdad Sketches* 48). As Bird suggests, this statement has a highly paternalistic tone, "relegating women travellers to the role of naughty schoolgirls whose privileges risk being revoked" (59). Her reaction and the use of the word "crushing" signal her concern about the mobility of the other women as well. Stark's ambiguous identity enables her to interrupt and denounce the dominance of the male colonialist easier than, for instance, the wives of the colonial officers whose identity and role within the community are established through their husbands. Stark's actions, contrary to Melman's suggestion that female travel writing is solely an individual act (*Women's Orients* 12), affect the rest of the community: "The

younger women were not unsympathetic: a gleam of adventure came into their eyes, which only made me unpopular with their husbands" (*Baghdad Sketches* 48). Stark unapologetically declares the consequences of her behaviour and how it also influenced the other women. Herein, it can be said that her book does more than simply carry the characteristics of the discourses of femininity where she illustrates the everyday life of the locals or individual path of a woman's empowerment; her words are also brave declarations against British aloofness and a call for female freedom of movement. She uses humour, which is a common narrative strategy in female travel writing, to disguise their breakaway from the discourses of femininity (Thompson 188, Mills 162, Bird 95), to emphasize the gender inequality:

> I began to feel like the Disturber of the Peace. This morbid nervousness about the doings of women when left to themselves could only be accounted for, I concluded, by the fact that Baghdad is near the site of the Garden of Eden: it must be a case of subconscious shock in the past. I began to feel like an anomaly: so many different people disapproved of me all at once, it might look as if I, and not they, were peculiar—which was absurd. (*Baghdad Sketches* 48)

Her witty criticism of patriarchal discourse through the use of the Biblical reference shows that the discourses of feminism are also present in her writing, although she never considers herself as such. Previously, she rejected her definition as eccentric, but this time she rejects the characterization of all the women as temptresses and unreliable and weak creatures since the Bible.

On the other hand, it should be noted that, especially regarding Eastern women, the discourses of feminism clash with those of anti-feminism or femininity (*Discourses of Difference* 72). Her Iraqi nationalist friend Nasir comments on the neatness of Stark's house and opines about his wife: "I, too, like a house well-arranged; but what can I do? That is a woman's business, and our women—they do not know: they do not want to know" (*Baghdad Sketches* 31). Accordingly, Stark describes Nasir's wife as a child who is "too elementary a creature to help any man to feel domestic" (Ibid.). Firstly, in spite of being a nationalist, Nasir elevates the Western women when he compares them with the Eastern women. Stark, as expected of the colonizer, supports this position and infantilizes the colonized women. What Spivak wanted to explain regarding the subaltern status or "double displacement" (Yeğenoğlu 55) of colonized women can be seen from the conversation between Stark and Nasir. While Stark tries to advocate the freedom of mobility for the Western women, she confines the Eastern women to the domestic sphere and assesses her value according to her domestic skills. However, when she writes about how Nejla (another Eastern woman) served her family "like a slave," she presents her domestic skills as an inferior point. Bird explains that "contact zones

can become sites of sedimentation, with the undifferentiated 'Orient' becoming a backdrop against which European gender norms are reinforced" (77). Hence, regardless of evaluating Nasir's wife according to her domestic skills, here Stark uses the domesticity of Nejla as a way to reinforce European gender norms. Nevertheless, there are also instances where she praises and acknowledges the empowerment of the Eastern women, though it can still be regarded as a part of the Orientalist discourse. At least Stark defends Eastern women's value outside of the Oriental domestic sphere. In the chapter called "Education," Stark depicts female Arab teachers:

> They give themselves no air of feminine emancipation, but at eighteen or twenty launch out alone into strange and distant cities: they find their own lodgings and make their own lives in countries where professional women are as yet unknown and quite unprovided for; and they do it with a cheerful enthusiasm which middle-aged people attribute to ignorance and youth. (*Baghdad Sketches* 72)

These words show solidarity and support for the Eastern women's participation in the society outside the domestic sphere. As she advises the British women to improve themselves and be more active, Stark emphasizes the affords of the Eastern women. Unlike the male Orientalist's depiction of the exotic, sexual, ignorant and passive Oriental women, Stark portrays them as educated, brave and hard-working.

Stark not only criticizes the British community but also encourages them to be more involved in the lives and cultures of the Eastern people. Assuredly, this is not an anti-colonialist stance, and she justifies her gender performance and interest in the Arabic language and culture through obtaining colonialist discourse:

> [e]very country has its own way of saying things. The important point is that which lies behind people's words, and the art of discovering what this may be considered as a further step in the learning of languages, of which grammar and syntax are only the beginning. But if we listen to words merely, and give to them our own habitual values, we are bound to go astray. (Ibid. 61)

Stark emphasizes how language is inseparable from culture and how the British community's rejection of learning both the culture and the language initially harms imperialism itself. Thus, she answers the criticisms against her decision to learn Arabic and live among them. This example demonstrates how she negotiates the discursive constraints to achieve being more engaged with the Arabic culture and language; by stressing the utility of "going native" for the imperialist deeds, she justifies her own performance. To offer a solution, Stark suggests that the English men should be attentive and interested in understanding and acknowledging the

differences between Eastern and Western cultures. As for British women, the recommendations are more extensive and meticulous:

> Many Englishwomen spend the best part of their lives in the East; they have opportunities to know and influence people of all kinds; in fact, whether they wish it or not, they are bound to influence them, for good or ill. They are, as it were, a two-edged instrument in the hands of Empire; a unique one, since no other women live their lives abroad in the same way, but also a dangerous one … (Ibid. 62)

Stark subtly finds a way to combine the discourses of femininity and imperialism, which normally conflict with each other. As for Mills, philanthropy is where the feminine and imperialist discourses intersect (*Discourses of Difference* 72). Through claiming that female participation is beneficent for both imperialism and the East, Stark adopts the discourses of philanthropy. In order to achieve this, female travel writers, as Bird suggests, "must learn the art of saying unspeakable things in socially acceptable ways" (179). Accordingly, Stark finds a way to be intelligible through drawing upon philanthropy without sacrificing her desire to engage with the Eastern culture and, certainly, to travel freely, which is normally unspeakable for Englishmen. Additionally, Stark closes her argument with a striking example of an exchange between an English lady Mrs. X and her Iraqi friend Nasir Effendi. The problematic interaction occurs when Mrs. X makes an unexpected visit to Stark's house in the non-British neighbourhood when Nasir Effendi is also there. Stark illustrates the scene by saying:

> What she did was to look straight before her as if the gentlemen on either hand had become suddenly invisible and disembodied. She looked at me and talked to me: they might have been sitting on the moon, and that is no doubt what they felt like, for the atmosphere was cold … After a decent interval of conversation like an Arctic Ocean, with remarks like icebergs floating about, few and far between—Mrs. X. took her leave … She was quite unaware of having awakened hatred in the heart of a peaceful citizen. (*Baghdad Sketches* 63)

Nasir Effendi was aware that the Englishwoman did not want him to be there, yet he did not concede and subjugate, and instead resisted and made her leave: "If the Superior Englishwoman desired his absence, she was not going to get it, he sat limp but unmovable in his chair, in irritating silence" (Ibid.). In colonial discourse the voice of the Other is usually supressed, but here Stark almost silences Mrs. X and gives voice to the Other, seeing Mrs. X out. No words of Mrs. X are written by Stark, but she quotes Nasir: "'I knew she wanted me to go,' he said, 'I could see what she was thinking. They call us wogs'" (Ibid. 65). Considering that, once again, her audience in Iraq is British, Stark's statement is notably political and brave. In many instances, due to the necessity of recognition, Stark indeed uses certain strategies and presents

herself in a certain way. However, Stark has no tolerance or humility when the subject is aloofness and disrespect towards the Other.

The desert holds a symbolic—especially romantic— position within travel writing. It can be "empty landscapes, meaningful only in terms of a capitalist future," as Pratt states (*Imperial Eyes* 61), or a place which is "associated with emptiness and stands for the infinity of the universe and the human condition within it," according to Melman (*Women's Orients* 114). As for female travel writing, the desert continues to be highly significant but functions rather differently. Bird demonstrates the problematic relationship between women and spatiality due to the feminization of the Oriental landscape (142), and notes that "[t]hese wild spaces can become a locus of resistance against conquest and full apprehension, where identity is constructed in disturbing forms" (Ibid. 143). In Stark's narrative, the romantic approach towards the desert is present as she contends: "There is something royal in the manners of the desert … I never imagined that my first sight of the desert would come with such a shock of beauty and enslave me right away" (*Baghdad Sketches* 85). The use of the noble savage and desert narrative demonstrates the traditional romantic Arabist aspects of her work. Nevertheless, not being a masculine colonial subject such as T. E. Lawrence or Wilfred Thesiger changes the characteristics of her experience of this contact zone. Despite being prohibited by the regulations, Stark encounters the Bedouin people in the desert. Instead of the image of the "authentic" Bedouin in an untouched land, Stark comes across with a very transcultural contact zone:

> All here was a mixture of new things and very old. The Shaikh himself was such. Dressed in a yellow and black striped gown, or zibun, with a knife in his sash, and sleeves which ruffled over his hands, long and delicate as Van Dyck might have painted—a trait, by the way, often noticeable among Beduin chiefs—he talked to us about the League of Nations, about his new school with French educational posters on its mud walls … (Ibid. 51)

Stark, once more, surprises the reader through illustrating the Bedouin life as being very hybridized and Westernized, as opposed to the romantic image of the authentic Bedouin, the noble savage. Apart from the hybridity of the Bedouin Shaikh's identity, her gender performance becomes highly ambiguous in this contact zone. By virtue of his hospitality and hearing from the other Westerners, Shaikh offers Stark some alcoholic drinks before the dinner although he does not consume any, and Stark "assures" him by saying, "the national standard is lower for women and much touched by his thoughtfulness …" (Ibid. 52). In the contact zone, Stark's gender identity becomes fluid; the Shaikh's offer gives Stark the opportunity to adopt the masculine British gentlemen role. However, Stark chooses to present herself as a British

lady to stabilize—through "assuring" the Shaikh—her gender performance, which she disturbs in the first place by breaking the law regarding the European Ladies in Iraq. As a result, the discourses of femininity and masculinity clash in this scene. Moreover, it can be seen from the scene that although Stark has access to the harem, she still has dinner with the male. As Geniesse notes:

> The nomads treated the British women as if they were a third sex, welcoming them into the main tent to be waited on by black slaves, to lounge against silken cushions in the company of keen-eyed tribal chieftains, then sent them back to the women's tent to sleep among the ladies of the tribe. (100)

The Eastern men also had to protect the stability of their identities; when the European lady appears in the contact zone, it also unsettles the gender norms of the East. Thus, not to allow the Eastern women to be influenced by the ambivalence of the Western traveller, the Eastern men treats them as a third sex.

In *Baghdad Sketches*, the publishing strategies and discourses of femininity are more apparent than in the rest of her books. Being independent from the Royal Geographical Society and excluded from the British community in the beginning of her experience in the Middle East enable her to have a critical approach towards imperialism and to obtain discourses of feminism to certain extent to achieve the freedom of mobility. Nevertheless, Stark always continues to be a true believer and advocate of the British Empire, leading her to be acknowledged by the Royal Geographical Society and the British community. In her following book *The Valleys of the Assassins*, her narrative drastically transforms in parallel to the changes of her recognition and position in the British society, demonstrating the significance of the constraints on reception while producing a text.

3.2 *The Valleys of the Assassins and Other Persian Travels*

The reason for Stark's interest in Assassins is her encounter with the Druze priest, influencing her to explore the ruins of the Assassins' castles (Geniesse 104). As previously explained, mapping the unknown land, the *terra nullius*, and naming it, which is already known and was named by the original inhabitants of the land, is the quintessential role of the masculine explorer-hero. Furthermore, the subject of the Assassins had also been a recurrent theme in Orientalist texts; this subject eventually turned into a myth that has fascinated the Western world since the Crusaders. For instance, a German priest claimed that "[l]ike the devil, they [Assassins] transfigure themselves into angels of light" (Ibid. 105). Correspondingly, Albert Hourani asserts that the myth of the Assassins does not base itself on a truth claim constructed

by the Crusaders and does not appear in Arabic sources (96). In 1929, Stark studied the subject in the British Museum before meeting Mr. Hinks from the Royal Geographical Society. Mr Hinks assured her that he would assist her if she continued working on Persia and the Assassins and offered to published her in *The Geographical Journal* (Geniesse 120). Stark took Marco Polo's *Travels* (c. 1300) with her during the journey to Persia and also used the works of Joseph Von Hammer Purgstall as a source (Ibid. 105–106). Therefore, the journey was, from the beginning, profoundly connected to the Orientalist body of knowledge and the colonial discourse. Besides this, the books Stark read during her isolated childhood in Italy, as mentioned earlier, such as the Persian poet's Omer Khayyam's books translated by FitzGerald, can be regarded as another reason behind her interest.

Nonetheless, Persia differed immensely from Iraq for the British Empire, as between 1890 and 1940 Iran was an independent country. Hence, the interest and approach of the British Empire towards Iran was "imperial in tone if not colonising in practice," and due to it not being under British rule, Persia had a peripheral status for the British compared to the Arabian Peninsula, Levant and India (Henes 10). Accordingly, Stark's interest in Persia was rather peripheral as well; she learnt Arabic before Persian and was more fluent in Arabic (*Valleys* xxii). Unsurprisingly, the economic interest—the petroleum reserves and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company—was the main attraction of Iran for the British Empire, explaining the encouragement of the Royal Geographical Society for Stark to work in Persia. As Mary Henes points out, Stark travelled to Iran when the Anglo-Persian relations and Persia itself were politically stable, which is the period of Shah Reza and his reforms such as the banishment of the veil and development of the infrastructure (203). Thus, Stark takes advantage of the politics of this era to publish her book, where she discusses the modernization process of Iran as much as archaeology and history.

Even before publishing *The Valleys of the Assassins*, after returning from her journey, her maps and the information she gathered were praised by the British officers in Iraq, and Captain Holt considered the work "brave" (Geniesse 108). After this journey, Stark started to be recognized as a "competent" traveller (Ibid.) instead of a "little foreign thing" or an eccentric spinster living among the natives. Only through taking over the masculine role of the adventure-hero could she prove her value as a serious traveller. Moreover, in 1933 she received the Royal Geographical Society Back Grant, and Sir William announced that: "We have profited greatly by your literary talent and the attention you have paid to getting accurate transcript of the names along your routes, contributing to the correctness of our maps" (qtd. in Geniesse 148). Stark participated in the Orientalist discourse by producing scientific information for the Empire and

obscured the gender boundaries more than by going out of the domestic sphere. Being awarded by the Royal Geographical Society attracted the publishers, and *The Valleys of the Assassins*, Stark's first full-length book, was published in 1934; the success of this book led to the publication of *Baghdad Sketches*, despite its being written afterwards.

Tim Youngs considers the quest as a fundamental part of travel writing: "Over the centuries, the object of the quest and the way that the quest story is told may have changed, but the basic structure of subject, object, passage and obstacle remain" (101). *The Valleys of the Assassins* shares many characteristics with the traditional quest, as the author sets off to search for the Rock of Alamut while experiencing many misfortunate events and also including her return to Baghdad. Besides this, in the second chapter it is explained that the tradition of the "quest" was also related to the masculine tradition of travel writing. To be able to have credibility and assert truth since the subject matter of this book is not the everyday life of the local people, she adopts the male voice in her writing, contrary to the diary-like and manners-and-customs writing of the articles published in the *Baghdad Times*. Nonetheless, Stark's writing also diverges from the masculinist tradition of the quest at certain points. Youngs notes that:

> the importance of the goal overrides the interests of those whom he or she encounters along the way. The places and the people they meet on the way are subordinated to … and exist in relation to the quest, aiding or hindering its accomplishment … quests are for the benefit of the self. They reinscribe oppositions of self and Other and they do not allow for the direct representation of the Other's point of view. (94)

However, in Stark's book, the goal becomes secondary as she fails to accomplish it, and the interaction with the people she met and travelled with turns into the primary element of the book. Another time, her use of masculine and scientific discourse clashes with the sympathetic voice of the feminine discourse, and she combines geographical and archaeological details with entertaining and literary narratives. Furthermore, the name of the book is also as significant as in *Baghdad Sketches*; despite the full name being *The Valleys of the Assassins and Other Persian Travels*, the book is mostly about "the other Persian travels," namely Luristan, more than the area of the Assassins. Lewis demonstrates how female travel writers use the word "harem" in their titles to attract the audience and increase sales (12). Stark uses the word "Assassins" similarly to attract an audience, yet, unlike the female travel writers included in the works on "harem literature," Stark would like to attract the audience interested in the political and economic climate of the area by trying to avoid the expected feminine discourse.

As previously mentioned in the third chapter, the preface of this book, like *Baghdad Sketches*, considering the fact that it is Stark's first published book, is highly significant as she tries to justify her position and credibility as a female travel writer. I would like to now examine the preface in more detail. The first sentence of the book demonstrates how colonial ideology and power operate through colonial discourse: "An imaginative aunt who, for my ninth birthday, sent a copy of the Arabian Nights, was, I suppose, the original cause of trouble" (*Valleys* xxi). *Arabian Nights* has in the Western world always been the most familiar symbol of the exoticness of the East. It was printed in the West in English and French even before its Arabic publication, which had become an ethnographic source (especially for the harem) before the works of female travel writers (*Women's Orients* 63). According to Hawley, the *Arabian Nights* reference in this book "bespeaks her childlike expectations of the Arabic world, her hopes for a genie in a bottle, and her implicit quest for the magic flying carpet," and he adds that in her first texts, despite showing sympathy to the Other, she also follows the Orientalist tropes such as illustrating the East as being frozen in time, which can be associated with the influence of the *Arabian Nights* (329). Hence, with the title and this reference, Stark establishes the conventional "exotic" and "timeless" image of the Orient. Moreover, the self-depreciating humour of the word "trouble" sets the tone of criticism towards restriction against female travellers, yet in an acceptable way. Stark continues to criticize the British community in Iraq who cannot comprehend her desire to travel alone and learn about other cultures:

> those twin Virtues so fatal to *the joie de vivre* of our civilized West, the sense of responsibility and the illusion, dear to well-regulated minds, that every action must have a purpose—had not these virtues Responsibility and Purpose met me at every step with the embarrassing enquiry: "*Why* are you here alone?" and: "*What* do you intend to *do*?" (*Valleys* xxi)

As in *Baghdad Sketches*, anti-tourist rhetoric is present in *The Valleys of the Assassins*, starting from the preface with Stark stating that her motivation is the travel itself. Further in the text, Stark writes: "Our luggage was light: no bed, but a sleeping-sack; a saddle-bag with clothes and medicines on one side and food, chiefly tea and sugar, on the other" (Ibid. 47). Hence, it can be suggested that despite having the support of the Royal Geographical Society, Stark continued to travel in the same way since her first trip to meet Druze people, where she criticized Bell's extravagant way of travelling the same route.

Moreover, Stark criticizes the earlier convention of travel writing when "[l]iterary success was assured by the utilitarianism and scientific discourse" (Carr 57). She answers those questions by stating that she is travelling "for fun" and does not have any other reason behind

it, which is questionable regarding the encouragement of Mr. Hinks and the economic interest of the British Empire, as mentioned above, though her desire for travel itself is undeniable. Therefore, Stark's statement can be regarded as strategic disclaimers, which can be found in female travel writing, to defend herself from criticism. Stark also notes that, "I would advise all those who wish to see unwrinkled brows in passport offices to start out ready labelled as entomologists, anthropologists, or whatever other -ology they think suitable and propitious" (*Valleys* xxii). This dismissal of labelling originates from her lack of an official degree and being self-educated; she tries to point out her competency, despite not having a scientific title. Apart from the preface, Stark remarks later in the book:

> Anyone who wishes for scientific information about these matters is referred to the classics on the subject of the Assassins, Von Hammer Purgstall, Guyard, etc. … and to my own itinerary in *The Royal Geographical Society's Journal*, of January, 1931. What I write here is for pleasure, for other people's, I hope, but in any case for my own, for it is always agreeable to go over the wandering days. History and geography, arguments and statics are left out: I mention the things I like to remember as they come into my head. (Ibid. 185)

Indeed, Stark does not include scientific discourse in this book, but many highly detailed archaeological and anthropological data can still be found (Ibid. 153, 242), along with detailed maps of the regions (Ibid. 163, 180, 260). Her insistence of differentiating this book from her scientific article for *The Royal Geographical Society Journal* can be seen as a result of the tendency of the segregation of literary and scientific forms of writing during the early twentieth century (Carr 74). Yet, the compulsion to establish a sense of credibility in her writing brings about the use of scientific data and maps in some parts of her writing. For instance, Braaksma claimed that the: "General reader and scholar alike will feel disappointed after finishing *The Valleys of the Assassins*" (qtd. in Henes 206). Not being able to set a single literary tone in her writing caused negative criticism. However, her hybrid narrative, along with her ambivalent identity as a colonizer, enables her to expose the unstable nature of the Western scientific discourse and how it is realized in the East:

> The particular name of the Rock is not Alamut, as traveller ancient and modern seem to take for granted. It is they and not the inhabitants of the valley who call it so, and they have done it so effectually that now the people of Qasir Khan also begin to talk of it as Alamut to strangers, and only after questioning admit that this is not its proper name. (*Valleys* 177)

Stark corrects the previous knowledge created by the male colonialists with the knowledge of the East; she prefers to refer to the place as the natives call it, and therefore gives a voice to them in her text instead of reiterating the Orientalist knowledge. Hence, it reveals that the so-

called “discoveries” and “explorations” are only the act of renaming the places by Westerners to establish authority. Stark also demonstrates how this action is recognized in the East; the East merely continues to use its own knowledge unless interacting with a Westerner.

In this book, unlike in *Baghdad Sketches*, apart from the preface and the quotation above, the British community and criticism towards them are not present. Stark’s companions are always Eastern men. Melman demonstrates:

> … the role allocated to the tribesmen in the Arabian travelogue involves more than their speaking up or back to the Western observer: they become co-travellers. During the long and arduous journeys, all travellers … Westerners especially, depended entirely on the tribes’ protection of life and limb … [and] under such circumstances conventional colonial hierarchies broke down. (*Women's Orients* 117)

Stark is always aware of depending on the kindness of the locals and the knowledge of her guides. She acknowledges and emphasizes the hospitality of her hosts at every opportunity, especially when during her sickness the locals take care of her attentively (216). Moreover, she also considers this journey as being not only hers but also her Eastern co-travellers, which is emphasized through the use of the possessive pronoun:

> But though there are few instances in themselves better than those when, from an escalated ridge, one looks upon new country, the joy of complete achievement was not ours: and if this were a story with a plot instead of being merely the matter-of-fact diary it is, the Hungarian engineer would certainly figure as the villain. (Ibid. 247)

Additionally, at the end of the book, before Stark’s departure, ‘Aziz, her guide, and Stark “said good-bye to each other with hands upon our breasts,” highlighting the mutual respect and bond established among them during the journey (Ibid. 292). However, the monarch-of-all-I-survey narrative is still present in the text along with this friendship. Stark’s main aim is to be the first Westerner to climb at the Throne of Solomon, undertaking the role of the male adventure-hero. Moreover, at the same time she defends herself by claiming that because of being a “diary” the failure of the main goal is not significant for the text, recalling the disclaimer in the preface. In addition, Stark’s racist remarks towards Iranian culture and individuals appear throughout the text. She constantly depicts the local men as opium-smoking incompetents; she writes, “[u]nlike my other guides, Keram made no attempt to explain to me, but devoted himself to his belated opium, which I felt would make him quite useless if things became difficult as they appeared rapidly to be doing” (Ibid. 35). Stark also makes negative generalizations about the entire nation: “Stealing is the national art. The Lurs appear to pride themselves on it more than on anything else” (Ibid. 34), and she even articulates that the standards of being a good man in

Persia are "not very high" (Ibid. 69). Moreover, the "dirty" Oriental stereotype, which can be also seen in *Baghdad Sketche*s, also appears in this book:

> The Lurs had no soap, but they were very particular to pour water over their hands before and after a meal, and used to warm the second water, so that it had some cleansing property: otherwise they neither wash nor pray, and seem to get on without either of these virtues. (Ibid. 22)

Besides reiterating the "dirty" Oriental stereotype, Stark also considers their lack of religious practices as unvirtuous. Consequently, compared to the *Baghdad Sketches*, the racist commentary is more frequent, a fact that can be associated with the absence of the British community.

Nonetheless, similar to the attitude of the male British officers in Iraq, Persian men also restrict Stark because of her gender. Due to its peripheral position, the amount of material on Persia written by the British was quite limited during the early twentieth century, causing the discouragement of solo female travelling (Henes 14). One of the reasons behind Stark's inability to meet her goal is the constant interruption of the Iranian police, this time not the British, because of her being a solo female traveller, pointing out that her alleged racial superiority does not eliminate the constraints of gender. In her first encounter with the police they ask her if she knows that she is in Luristan, and she gets away with it with an official letter (*Valleys* 9). As a result, she has to be escorted by another policeman during a part of her journey and she immensely dislikes the situation as she notes, "one also wishes to remain insignificant enough to be left alone" (Ibid. 18). Not being accustomed to having a female traveller in the wilderness, the Persian male authorities do not know how to handle the situation and continually try to prevent her unaccompanied journey and question her intentions. During certain encounters with police, her race does not carry any significance:

> Presently one small figure detached itself and came galloping towards us. It turned out to be a policeman almost incoherent with rage. He took no notice of me, women in Persia being considered so insignificant that their families and not they are responsible for any foolishness they manage to commit. My family for the time being were *Hajji* and the Lur, who bowed under the torrent without thinking to blame me, and began to pour fulsome apologies into the ear of the Law. (Ibid. 19)

In this scene, she is not even held responsible for her own actions while her male Persian companions are in charge, a contact zone that a British male Orientalist would never experience. On the other hand, Stark takes advantage of this discrimination: "The great and almost only comfort about being a woman is that one can always pretend to be more stupid than one is and no one is surprised" (Ibid. 49). She subverts the norms of being a woman and uses these norms

cleverly to go beyond the very same norms; this "third space"[11] allows her to unsettle and refashion her identity as a woman. However, for C. J. Edmonds, a British political officer in Iraq, this sentence has a different meaning. Edmonds claims that female travellers are more advantageous since men are "almost completely debarred from contact, not only with half the population of the country he visits, but even with the other half on the domestic side of its everyday life" (qtd. in Henes 225). Disregarding the constraints on Stark's mobility by the Persian and British male authorities, Edmonds makes an oversimplified commentary on Stark's sentence.

At the same moment, she also performs cross-cultural dressing to be able to carry on her journey: "The wind still swished along, a noise of fine falling particles betraying its invisible presence. To wear a hat was out of the question. I enveloped myself in the brown *abba*, tightly pinned under the chin; climbed, and crouched with my back at the gale on the pack-mule" (*Valleys* 55). The importance of cross-dressing as a symbol of illustrating the instability of the self-identity was explained earlier. Here, Stark is wearing the Persian garment *abba* out of necessity, not for pleasure. Bird suggests that, contrary to male travellers who can freely talk about their pleasure of cross-cultural dressing (such as Pierre Loti), "for women travellers … circumlocutory strategies are required" (129). As previously stated, Stark is always careful about presenting herself as a perfect British lady to be intelligible in the society, not to be a peculiar spinster, and she always wears flamboyant hats. However, the hat she is wearing to underscore her femininity becomes an incomprehensible signifier of gender in the contact zone. She notes:

> My hat was always a great attraction, being made of finer felt than any in Luristan, and I had several times to explain that it was a woman's hat and men would be ashamed to be seen in it, whereupon it would regretfully be put down. (*Valleys* 36)

This experience of the contact zone reveals the arbitrary nature of the gender norms and disrupts the notion of identity on both sides. Stark reiterates Western gender norms through emphasizing that "men would be ashamed." In some instances, her gender identity becomes unintelligible for the Eastern men, particularly during the excavations when she represents herself as the Orientalist scientist:

> they refused to dig for me in the absence of their chief. No woman, said they, had ever travelled in Luristan: they did not think I was a woman at all: and they

[11] See subchapter 2.2, pg. 40.

> had heard that the government sent spies who pretended to come for antiques: they would not go against the law. (Ibid.)

Throughout the text, being detained by the police multiple times, she is mistaken for a spy, drawing another parallel between the attitude of the British community in Iraq and that of the Persian men towards Stark. Even her own guides (Ibid. 35) and the police (Ibid. 135) thought that she was a spy. Another shared behaviour of the British and Persian is othering Stark because of her being single at her age: "The red-bearded uncle came up to me and began to cross-examine me on the interesting but inexplicable problem of why I was not married" (Ibid. 37). Being kilometres away from any Westerner does not help her to avoid this question and being marginalized as a single woman; in both cultures, a woman should be married. Constantly being questioned regarding her marital status and considered as a spy by the British and the Persian, regardless of their gender, indicate that Stark's position threatens their sense of unified identity, at the same time causing anxiety. Furthermore, the "double marginalization" of the Eastern women can be observed in this text, and is also present in *Baghdad Sketches*. Although Stark constantly criticizes the opium-smoking habit of the Persians, she waits for one of her companions to finish his pipe:

> It was the time for his pipe, and I offered to sit by the roadside and wait while he smoked it—a suggestion which evidently touched him, for he repeated it over and over again to his friends as an illustration of the "Akhlaq-i shrin" or sweetness of character of women in Europe. (Ibid. 33)

Once again, by narrating the words of the Oriental men elevating her and the Western women, Stark becomes accomplice in the double marginalization of the Eastern women, though this time she does not comment on it as she does with Nasir's wife in *Baghdad Sketches*.

Nevertheless, when it comes to the mimicry of the Eastern subject, Stark carries on an Orientalist attitude, and the salvage travel writing quality of her text can be perceived. Stark asks the policeman and tribesmen about their opinion on the new European dress code established by the Shah Reza by emphasizing the incompatibility of the European clothing with the climate conditions in Luristan, which the policeman and the tribesmen agree with (Ibid. 10). Through directly quoting his words, Stark shows the policeman's perspective, but at the same time the sense of salvage travel writing, the apprehension of capturing the vanishing cultures, occurs (as in Baghdad Sketches). Melman points out the hypocrisy of the salvage travel writing, in that "[t]he travellers' project of humanizing the Arab, documenting his life and making him audible, is marked by a paradox. What they describe as 'authentic' is itself about to disappear … because the related processes of imperialism, Westernization, and modernization were

irreversible" (*The Middle East/Arabia* 117). Particularly while depicting a young Lur, the hypocrisy of salvage travel writing is highly apparent:

> The accomplice was a young Lur of eighteen or so who had been taken in early days from his own place and civilized. The process, I thought, had not gone very deep; not much beyond 'arak and cigarettes, a European shirt without a collar … (*Valleys* 44)

Stark clearly mocks the teenager for being a mimic man, but simultaneously shows the ineffectiveness of the "civilizing mission," which only works on the superficial level. This attempt to Westernize and ridicule the Oriental subject demonstrates Stark's anxiety as a colonizer. Besides discussing the compatibility of the European clothes with the geographical conditions of Iran, Stark disrespects the people:

> As the aim of the Persian government is to have them all dressed à la Ferangi in a year's time, with peaked kepis and the Shah's portrait stamped on the lining, it is worthwhile perhaps to give a picture of them as far as possible before too much tidiness spoils them. (Ibid. 3)

Although Stark uses the typical romantic discourse of the "noble Bedouin" and praises the tribesmen's lifestyle, she also immediately constructs the binary oppositions between the tidy West and untidy East as if this is what they are supposed to be. Further, the use of the word "spoil" indicates her patronizing attitude towards them. On the other hand, Stark has a sympathetic yet still patronizing approach when depicting two nomad women's reaction to technology:

> "Kahraba," electricity! I lit my torch and they murmured the word as if it held a whole heartful of longings. The worship of the East for mechanical things seems to us deplorable and shallow; but seen here against so naked a background, the glamour of the machine, of something that gives comfort without effort in a place … So their eyes saw it, more truly, perhaps, than ours, who buy the thing as soulless glass and wire. (Ibid. 60)

Instead of emphasizing their need of civilization, she praises their sense of freedom and connection with the nature. Yet, by rejecting the hybrid nature of the contact zone, she continues othering the nomad women.

Compared to the *Baghdad Sketches*, in *The Valleys of the Assassins* Stark simultaneously marginalizes the Eastern subject more and is herself marginalized more. Her gender becomes more unintelligible to the nomads, who have never encountered a female traveller and archaeologist before due to the peripheral position of Persia and the lack of a British community. Moreover, her hybrid narrative between the diary-like feminine discourse and the masculine discourse of the quest and exploration creates potentialities to examine the

ambivalence and heterogeneity of colonial discourse. This heterogeneity and ambivalence allow the contemporary reader to comprehend the colonial production of knowledge and the process of Othering to establish a sense of superiority. Although this can also be observed in the other examples of "salvage travel writing" written by male authors, Stark's ambivalent gender performance and national identity firmly unfix and disrupt the notion of the unified self-identity of the colonizer male as well as the British.

4. Conclusion

Travel writing is about the "Self" and the culture of the Self as much as it is about the encounter with the other. What we witness in the travel writing is the way the traveller interacts with the other by carrying the luggage of herself and her cultural background. In the contact zones where this interaction takes place, the traveller and host culture both broaden their perspectives by learning about each other and/or the asymmetrical relations of power; travel writing can therefore be considered as an inner-journey and a form of self-exploration as much as an instrument for colonial discourse. The studies solely focusing on one of these tend to oversimplify the complex set of power-relations and exclude the ambivalent texts which do not fit their framework. The Foucauldian concept of discourse allows us to understand the exercising of power in a broader sense and see the shared interest of post-colonial and gender studies. Hence, through understanding this parallelism and operation of power in a Foucauldian instead of unidirectional sense, the discursive constraints affecting the production and reception of female travel writing and the role of the female traveller in the Oriental contact zone can be perceived.

Growing up in Italy in an unconventional family that lost their wealth shaped Freya Stark's identity in an ambiguous way. Her writing sets an example for what Sara Mills terms "clashes of discourses" due to this ambivalence; being excluded from the British community in Iraq caused a constant need to prove her Britishness and adherence to imperialist mindset, and also allowed her to sympathize with the colonized because of her also being Othered by the Western colonialists. Her sympathy towards the other should not simply be regarded as the feminine characteristic of travel writing coming with the discourses of femininity. It can also be associated with her class background and national identity. "Going native" was not a simple choice but also an economic obligation for her since she could not afford to live among the British, a condition which she emphasizes in *Baghdad Sketches*. However, despite portraying her choice of accommodation as a necessity, she highlights that living among the locals is very useful for her to learn the language and culture, and therefore beneficial for the imperialist agenda. In a way, Stark needs to justify herself and negotiate with the discursive constraints to be able to be recognized within the community and be intelligible.

Only through negotiating these discursive constraints, hence obtaining the discourses of femininity and imperialism, do her writings gain credibility. Such credibility led her to receive an award from the male-only Royal Geographical Society and publish her first book *The Valleys of the Assassins*. However, as can be seen from *The Valleys of the Assassins*, to be supported

by the Royal Geographical Society did not diminish the need for obtaining a feminine discourse, a justification which can be observed from the disclaimers in the preface. Another example of the discourses of femininity can be realized in her anxiety to assert her femininity at any possible opportunity, such as through her clothing, the commentary on her desire to have a husband and a regular family and the desire to be treated as a "lady."

In addition to Mills's idea that female travel writing is where the conflicting discourses clash, resulting in ambivalence, according to Bird, the Orient becomes a stage where female travel writers can refashion themselves and trespass the gender norms. This creates a disturbance for the male colonizer who, as a result, anxiously tries to control the female body and the mobility through the legal regulations that Stark shares in detail to criticize the double standard and restriction of the female traveller. Besides, unlike the other female travellers, Stark's ambiguous identity also disturbs the British community in Iraq due to her class and national background. For instance, Gertrude Bell, a British aristocrat, was more easily recognized and accepted by the public. Although her unconventional choice of career and desire to travel unaccompanied caused trouble, Stark had to struggle much more compared to Bell, which she mentions in her letters. This situation can also be regarded as an example of the lack of solidarity between the female travellers. Female travel writing was indeed a revolutionary act since it obscured the division of male and female and allowed women to assert knowledge and participate in the production. However, it was more an outcome of the individual acts instead of an organized feminist movement, though it had political outcomes and paved the way for future female travellers. Therefore, female travel writers should not be considered as proto-feminist as opposed to the general tendency due to the revolutionary aspect of their work.

The anxiety the colonial subject experiences due to the realization of the ambivalence and the instability of the colonial discourse, along with the identity of the colonizer and the colonized, occurs due to the ambivalent gender identity of the female travel writer. This anxiety causes the restriction and marginalization of these women. This marginalization, however, is not sufficient to prevent them from positioning themselves as Orientalists. On the other hand, their so-called racial superiority did not help them to avoid experiencing the disadvantages of their gender. The colonized male did not treat the female traveller as they treated the male traveller. They became the third sex for the tribesmen, their ambivalent gender performance creating anxiety in the Oriental male through disrupting their fixed notions of what it is to be a woman or a man. Female travellers were travelling, dining, digging and climbing with men, but at the end of the night they were sent to the harem to sleep with the rest of the women. This symbolic in-between status of the female in the contact zone clearly illustrates the possibilities

brought up by travelling abroad. Nevertheless, most of the female writers, like Stark, justified their motive of travelling and their presence in the East by serving the ends of imperialism. Hence, the agency of the female traveller, just like the agency of Bhabha's mimic man, is within the patriarchal/colonial discourse.

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